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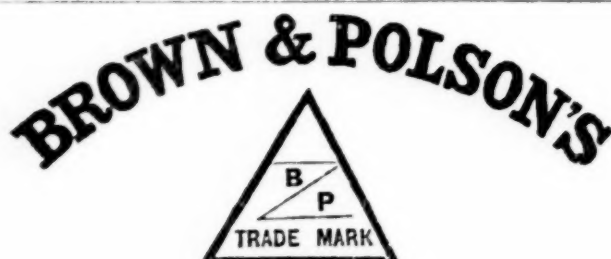
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MRS. SMACKLEBURY'S LODGERS.

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CHAPTER VI.

"VAULTING AMBITION THAT O'ERLEAPS ITSELF."

ADA GRENWYL had engaged herself as governess in the family of a Northamptonshire squire, who bore the name of Norton. His home and heritage were situate about equally distant from the two towns of Kettering and Wellingborough.

Mr. and Mrs. Norton were now rapidly becoming middle-aged people; she, the younger of the two, having already rounded the period of forty. More than twenty years before, Henry Norton had come of age, under circumstances which promised very fairly for his future life. He found awaiting him, not only an estate yielding full well two thousand a-year, but withal a sweetly pretty and affectionate cousin, who had been all but born in love with him.

He took possession of Bloxham Hall, and turned Miss Norton into Mrs. Ditto almost at one and the same time. They, if ever it could be truly said of any, were the right people in the right places. Everybody so thought and so said. Everybody liked the handsome, healthy, genial young couple. All below them, and not a few above them, envied their lot.

There seem to be a few persons whose shoes are so well fitted, that they pinch nowhere, their feet not being too delicate. So it was with the Nortons. And there appeared no reason why it should not ever be thus with them.

One solitary but serious error marred all, and troubled for all time to come the stream which, in its early course, ran so smoothly and so clear.

They had been wedded about eight years, and had already, if I rightly recollect, four children. It was Whit-Monday, and the last day of the month of May, 1830, when Mr. Norton was called upon to attend a semi-political dinner at Wellingborough.

Any one who possesses a file of the *Northampton Herald*, reaching back to the above year, may, if he likes, discover

the report of that banquet, and of the speeches then spoken.

It only falls to me to relate, that none of those speeches brought down a more hearty echo of approval than that of Henry Norton.

It was really an unstudied harangue, and he was as much astonished at his own success as any of the company who heard him. But the champagne glasses of the George and Dragon were of the largest size, and "eloquence," said one of our greatest orators, "is in the audience." So Mr. Norton's speech was the most decided hit of the evening.

Elated, much more with success than with wine, he quitted the inn about nine o'clock, to ride home through the twilight, which now lasted from sunset to sunrise again.

You have probably read stories, in which the mediæval ideas of Satanic influence on man have been embodied, and handed down to us. The reproachless knight, or the blameless priest, is met at the cathedral door by an insinuating gentleman in a black cloak, whose speech teems with all manner of benevolence, but whom the sight of a relic or a crucifix makes very cross and uneasy.

When Henry Norton rode away that night from the George and Dragon, he was overtaken just as he got out of the town by his friend Mr. Danbury, a member of that profession which, as some are fond of saying, takes care now-a-days of the interests of the kingdom of darkness. Not that Mr. Danbury was a lawyer of the type which has given point to the sarcasms against attorneys as a class. He liked sport much better than the office, and public dinners even better than sport. He and Henry Norton were great friends and old companions; and sure I am that the notion of doing harm by his words was as far from his thoughts as possible. But were all people as harmless in act as in design, not only this history, but, I will add, the great majority of this world's histories, would have been for ever unwritten.

Danbury—for he was barely



thirty—overtook his friend a short way out of the town; and, both reining their horses into a walk, the conversation was opened by the man of law.

"By Jove! Norton, I had no idea you could speak in that way. Now, we are old friends, and you won't be angry with me, I know. Did you get it by heart beforehand?"

"Not I! I give you my word of honour. When I came, I had no intention of speaking at all; but, as they called upon me, I didn't like to refuse. So you really think I did it well?"

"Well! I assure you I never heard a better speech in my life. Really, Norton, it'll be a great shame, with such a gift for speaking as you have, if you never speak in a better place than a country inn. You should get into Parliament! Upon my word, I'm speaking quite seriously—I am. You ought to be in Parliament!"

"Parliament! I'm not rich enough, to begin with."

"Rich enough! Why, any one with a borough would be glad enough to get you in for it. You could afford to live in London, and I'll be bound to say you'd very quickly get into office."

"Indeed! Do you really think so?"

"Of course. Good oratory is everything; and if you spoke as you did to-night, on the spur of the moment, what might you not do if you made it your study? I tell you as a friend, Norton, it's quite your duty to think about it."

"Well! as you say so, I will think about it. It never occurred to me before. You see, I have a family——"

"And what could be better for them? You'd be in the ministry before long. A man who can speak well must get on. And then, instead of leaving your eldest son a squire, and your second son a parson, you might leave the one an earl and the other a bishop. Don't think I'm talking nonsense! Look at Canning—and his mother was only an actress. Besides, you owe a duty to your country, as well as to your family, you know."

Well, there was a great deal in that, to be sure, and he would think it over, and talk to his wife about it—was the final answer of Henry Norton, as they parted at the crossing of four roads. Then he rode home.

With the morning came back his old quiet life; but not the quiet contentment which, until then, had suffered no serious

interruption. It was with him as with that princess in the Arabian story, whom the report of distant wonders had blinded to all the delights of her own house and garden. Henry Norton was now no more, in his own eyes, the enviable man, endowed so largely with health, wealth, and happiness. He was a man kept out of his rightful position—an orator, whose voice should long ago have been commanding the applause of a listening senate, but whom his dull neighbours were only just beginning to value. His wife, to whom the whole had been confided, was herself agitated by an ambition, kindred in spirit, but coloured according to her sex. Of course she knew that whatsoever thing Henry attempted, that he would, beyond all question, accomplish. But, until now, any thought of a home and interests elsewhere than at Bloxham, had never once crossed her mind. She was as likely to have thought whether she would not be more comfortable in another planet. She had visited London three or four times, and enjoyed Bloxham all the more for the brief absences from it. But living in London only as one of its nameless units, and living in it a recognised habitué of its loftier circles, are two exceedingly different things. Her twenty-seventh year, now all but completed, was leaving Mrs. Norton very nearly as pretty as when her cousin took her to wife.

And the pair found much mutual sympathy, as, during those long June days, they sauntered about the old-fashioned garden, and marvelled at the excess of humility which had so long kept them in their very unmerited obscurity.

But I do believe that a little time and thought—for though not wise, they were scarcely fools—would have restored the lost balance of their minds. But while they were moping down in Northamptonshire, the life of a king was wearing away, in weakness and agony, at Windsor.

On the last Sunday morning in June, King William, and no longer King George, was prayed for in Bloxham Church. Unless there might be here and there a survivor from the reign of Queen Anne, none living could remember any royal name save George.

There would now at once be a general election for a new Parliament. A Tory baronet of Mr. Norton's county had a commanding influence in a certain small borough. It was not entirely in his power, for it held a few electors, who might, if

they would, be independent. But they were little likely to oppose any candidate who had the support of Sir Petherick Oldways. If Mr. Norton would put up for Little Scrappington, Sir Petherick was willing to nominate him, and there would be none of the expenses which attend the election for a large or contested borough.

It was all arranged, and the 4th of August was to be the day of nomination, and Mr. Norton was exulting to think how the way was being smoothed down before him, when the tidings rushed across the British Channel, and into every corner of our island, that the King of France, defeated and dethroned, was hurrying a fugitive to England.

The news of the three days' Revolution in Paris aroused in this land a spirit too much akin to revolution to please many who had found the good old paths so profitable and so pleasant. Loud arose the cry that there should be no more rotten boroughs—that the House of Commons should henceforth really, and not in name only, represent the people. And places hitherto content to take the members allotted to them, woke up into fierce and angry independence.

Little Scrappington roused itself to shake off the Oldways' influence. It was frightful, it was alarming, it was unaccountable, but it was as certain as anything which the earth could show. The borough would not be won without a struggle. Norton must put his hand in his pocket. There were non-resident free-men, whose votes might be obtained, and whom he must bring to the poll at his own expense; and they would insist, after the manner of their kind, on coming in carriages-and-four, if at all. Then there would be expensive treatings, which must be kept up as long as the poll was kept open, which, as the law stood then, might be for I know not how many days. "Then," said Mr. Norton's agent, "we must have a little money for—you know—certain matters which will be put down in the bill under the name of 'sundries.'" We will not give the name of Mr. Norton's democratic opponent. It would be very hard upon him, for he is now, in old age, one of our stubbornest Conservatives, and I am sure a reference to those old times would very greatly annoy him.

Henry Norton won the day. It cost much money, and more trouble; and, owing to the then excited state of the people, it involved some real personal danger. But he won the election. Half

his balance at the banker's having gone to obtain his new position, he was forced to draw out very nearly all that remained to enable him to enter on the life that position entailed. A house must be taken and furnished in London. To live in a modest lodging would, of course, not accord with the career our friends had been taught to promise themselves. The new M.P., by virtue of his eloquence, was to mount into a leading statesman, and never to quit the house until his manifest merit should win the sovereign to ennoble him.

The Parliament was to meet on the 1st of November, and before that day, Mr. Norton, already distrustful of the great plunge he had taken, was settled, with his family, in a house near Berkeley-square.

The elections throughout England had issued in a great accession of numbers to the Whig opposition, and the Catholic Emancipation had alienated many Tories from the ministry; therefore, they had every motive for taking good care of the votes yet available to them. So the Nortons found a very ready access to great society. Their sacrifices had not quite been thrown away. It was something to be bidden to feasts among lords and ladies. It was a grand thing to shake hands with the First Minister of the Crown, who was likewise the First Soldier of Europe. It could hardly have been a mistake to enter such company, which received them with so warm a welcome, too. Henry Norton's vote was placed unreservedly at the disposal of the Government—but, alas! how vainly! November was barely half over when that Government fell. The party to which our unlucky squire had committed himself were left stranded in opposition; and, if the present temper of the nation were any guide to future history, likely to remain there for a good long generation to come.

Christmas arrived, and our friends went back in a most un-Christmas-like state of mind to their home at Bloxham Hall. The traditions of Bloxham, hitherto fully sustained by the present owner, had ordained that liberal gifts and open-handed hospitality should mark every return of that season. But this year the ruinous expenses of the election and of settling in London, constrained the Nortons to narrow their Christmas charities within a very close compass indeed. And, to do them justice, I believe the retrenchment gave nearly as much sorrow to them as

to those poor persons who found themselves disappointed—defrauded, in their own eyes—of the treats they had so confidently expected. And surely, if ever the softening influences of that season had been wanted, they were wanted by the rural districts of England in that Christmas of 1830. Through many a long stretch of country, the long dark nights were lighted up with fires kindled by the incendiary. Everywhere was dull distrust and sullen suspicion, and a fear lest the strong foundations of English life should now be falling asunder.

Before the new year was a month old the Nortons were once again in town. Poor Henry was already aware that the oratory of the George and Dragon was not, in all points, calculated to win the ear of the Commons assembled in Parliament. With March came in the grand Reform Bill. Mr. Norton was not the member who complained of the bill, that its mere announcement had "fairly taken his breath away." He found breath enough and courage enough to get upon his legs and patter out some angry manifesto against the revolutionary proposal. But, poor man! the sarcastic "hears" of the ministerial ranks were little favourable to mental gymnastics, and his intended great speech dribbled itself away like a river losing itself in a morass; and his presence of mind utterly forsaking him, he sat down, amidst (I quote from "Hansard's Debates") "great laughter from *both* sides of the House." Very nearly the sole sentence coherently reported in his speech was the declaration "that he was resolved to live and die as his ancestors for the last four centuries had lived and died, a faithful member of the Church of England, and a friend to the glorious Reformation." And the poor member for Little Scrappington went home that night about as well satisfied with himself, and as fully assured of his own wisdom, as the unlucky jackdaw, when the real peacocks plucked him of the stolen plumage in which he had aspired to strut like one of themselves.

The whipper-in of the Tories, whom a common danger had re-united, assured him that, for the present, he would serve his party most effectually by a silent vote. This was by no means the position which the poor man had imagined for himself, and for which he had spent nearly all the money he possessed. But there seemed no help for it, and he ruefully resigned himself to that inferior existence. Nor

did he quite despair that good fortune might happen to him yet. As the thought of the great Bill grew more and more familiar, the Tories began to boast that public opinion would quickly take another turn. All who had anything to lose, all who had anything honestly to gain, were beginning to dread the new order which Reform would bring to pass. The country, cured of its delirium, would esteem more highly the mere voters who had saved her, than the eloquent declaimers, who, syren-like, would have lured her on to revolution and ruin. With such confidence, Mr. Norton, amongst other senators, adhered to the falling cause, and actually stopped the bill, putting ministers into a minority on one important point.

Brief triumph! As quickly as the pomp of equipages and escort could be got into order, the king flew down to Parliament to dissolve it, and Henry Norton's hardly-bought honours dropped off his back ere he had enjoyed them for as much as three-quarters of a single year!

Yet he was persuaded to try again. There were tempters in abundance to tell him that the tide would turn yet, and all the more rapidly because of its present violence in the direction of anarchy. So our poor friend made one more desperate dip into his purse, and at the cost of a serious mortgage on his estate, sat for Little Scrappington once again.

Accompanied, as before, by his wife and children, he now re-entered on his London life. Such a delightful life! It was a hot summer that year, and the temperature of the air very faintly symbolized the burning heat of the political atmosphere. Poor Mrs. Norton, as she sat looking out on the sweltering pavement, pined and sickened for the cool shades of her Bloxham garden. There are plenty of nice country places within an easy drive of London, but she was all but cut off from any suburban enjoyments. Such treats cost money, and it had already become a question how they were to meet their necessary expenses. Then an event which, when it came, would add to their family circle, was rapidly advancing. So she could not now enjoy any of the gaieties of London. Her devoted husband sat at committees in the morning, and in the House at night, not seldom remaining at the beck of his party until after sunrise. More than once, he was so overcome with sleep when the division took place, that he nearly walked into the wrong lobby. The life agreed as little

with his health as with his wealth. He lost his blissful ignorance of possessing a stomach. His poor Elizabeth watched him coming in and going out, sick with terror lest (by no means an unlikely thing) he should be one day brought back to her mortally wounded by the bludgeon or the brickbat of some over-zealous reformer. Hearing that the houses of anti-reformers were known and marked; she scarcely dared so much as to look out of the windows.

A week or two before the birth of her child, and just on the eve of a critical division, some cowardly brute sent her an anonymous note, warning her, as she valued the life of her husband, to dissuade him from voting as he meditated.

Parliament kept sitting on and on. Even St. Partridge's Day, this year, brought no holiday to the weary legislators. Norton lost his old rude health, and, along with it, his old good looks. Poor Lizzy almost resigned herself to the belief that, one way or other, political life would make an end of him. Yet he felt that honour forbade his retreat while his country could yet be saved. She was to the full as fond of him as ever, though she had had more cross words from his lips during the last few months than during all her previous life—and she considered herself to have been, in a manner, his wife from her very birth. So ruinous had been the cost of his first election, that I do not think he would have felt justified in standing again, but for the hope that his means would one day be largely augmented. They had a West Indian cousin, who was at least as likely to leave his estate to them as to any one besides. Mrs. Norton had a rich uncle, and it is the manner of rich uncles, who, like him, have no children, to dispose of their money to nephews and nieces who stand well in society.

There was reported to be a vein of ironstone on the Bloxham estate; and the canal, for which a company was already forming, would make such mineral wealth available. At all events, it would raise every estate through which it ran—Mr. Norton's among the number—to a value much exceeding its present worth. So Henry Norton stuck to the sinking ship. How all the struggles of his party proved of no avail—how many of them have lived to laugh at their own alarms, and to be very glad they were thus defeated—are matters of English history, and no fit subjects for so trivial

a pen as mine. All I will say of them is, that ere the close of 1832 a dissolution again thrust our friend out of parliament, and (this time) without any chance of a restoration. For the Bill had passed, and Little Scrappington, as a borough, had no more existence than the kingdom of Lilliput. But, indeed, its latest representative had no further fighting power left in him. Fully conscious of being a laughing-stock among his neighbours, and half-conscious of deserving it, Mr. Norton left London and its ambitions for ever, and retreated to his ancestral home laden with debts too likely to embitter any home in the world. Not one of the things on which he had vainly reckoned came to his relief.

The West Indian property declined so in value, that when their cousin died and left it away from them, the Nortons were verily thankful to gain the loss of it. A month spent in poking and boring for ironstone, brought to light not so much as would have made a horse-shoe nail. The railway system, now in its dawning, for ever annulled the canal scheme, and the rich old uncle died insolvent.

Have we been digressing too long? Let us return to our heroine, who has arrived at Bloxham Hall while we have been giving this sketch of the past life of its master and mistress.

CHAPTER VII.

ADA'S NEW LIFE.

ADA met with a very friendly and cordial reception from the master and mistress of Bloxham Hall. With recent sorrows lying so heavy upon her, no possible fortune could for the present have made her quite happy; but a cheerful and pleasant home would have given her a good chance of recovering some of her former spirits.

If in her new situation the peace she so much required was not to be largely found, the failure must not be set down to any wanton omission of her new employers.

We have dwelt (lengthily enough) on the deplorable mistake which had made the Nortons hopelessly poor for life. They were of a class who can thrive only by remaining in the state in which they find themselves. They had fretted against it, and tried to create a position for themselves. They had ludicrously failed, and (if no miracle befel them) they would

have to struggle against poverty as long as they survived. They had no stomach for a vigorous battle with fortune. Mrs. Norton had no great gift for household management; she was not extravagant, and would never have outrun the ample means of their earlier days, but neither could she make the little left them go the greatest way. The financial debates of Bloxham Hall were conducted somewhat after the following fashion:—

Once in two or three months Mr. Norton would rush into his wife's presence under strong pecuniary pressure, and, addressing her as "madam," ask her what, when she *had* got him into gaol, she proposed to do with herself and the children?

Then Mrs. Norton would take out her pocket-handkerchief, and beg her husband—if he meant to say she was extravagant—just to look at the gown she had got on. And then, her consort having gone growling away, Mrs. Norton would make a rush into the kitchen, scold the servants to the very verge of abdication, and ruthlessly lop off some little luxury of the household. In a few hours Henry would re-appear in that milky, repentant state commonly assumed by a husband who feels he has gone too far, and the demon of embarrassment, like a gorged constrictor, would lie voiceless and harmless for yet another term of days. For little prosperous as this family were, they had hitherto contrived to maintain a position among their country neighbours. But, as will be readily believed, a house in which ruin was but just kept at bay, could hardly afford a happy home. The fatal mistake of the Nortons was, in more ways than one, visited on their innocent children. For instance, their youngest boy, Frederick, had been for some time of an age for school; but the ever-pressing want of money had brought them to keep him still at home, and he shared with his three sisters the instructions of Miss Grenwyl.

None will be greatly surprised that Ada found Master Frederick the leading difficulty of her new position. It might be about three months after her arrival, when on one particular day she felt compelled to lay information against him before the ruling authorities.

The matter somehow came on for discussion when the family party were seated at lunch,—lunch it was for Mr. and Mrs. Norton, but dinner for the children and their governess.

There was to be a dinner-party that day, and one or two of the guests were to make a short stay in the house. Frederick's papa and mamma could not agree to behold his conduct in the same light. Mr. Norton was angry; Mrs. Norton conducted the defence. Her husband took his stand on two great practical questions. Frederick should not come down to the company that evening, whether at dessert or in the drawing-room; and he should go to school the first opportunity—the sooner the better, if, indeed, any respectable school would be willing to take him.

"Good gracious, Henry! why, one would think the child had been committing murder, by the way you talk!"

"And no unlikely thing if it does come to that by-and-bye—you taking his part in all manner of wickedness; just the way to bring him to the gallows, if that's what you want!"

"Well, Miss Grenwyl," said Mrs. Norton, turning to Ada with a petulance which, to do her justice, was very unusual in her, "I hope, at all events, that *you* are satisfied. As you complain so of poor Frederick, you must be glad to see how thoroughly his papa takes your side."

Another moment might have brought to Ada's lips an answer more just than submissive, but Mr. Norton's own reply rendered all self-defence unnecessary from her.

"Now, Elizabeth, don't go making a bigger fool of yourself than you are by nature! I'll be bound for it that that bad boy has given Miss Grenwyl trouble without end over and over again, and she never said a word about it. Emma," continued Mr. Norton, turning to his eldest girl, "you can tell me whether or not it is so. Now, is this the first time he has given Miss Grenwyl matter of complaint against him?"

"Oh dear no, papa! No, indeed! Over and over again we've had such work with him in the school-room as you never saw in your life, papa! And when we're out of doors, he's quite the terror of our lives. Only the day before yesterday he threw pepper all over the pudding; and then Miss Grenwyl got some bread and treacle for us, and if he didn't put some treacle inside my garden-bonnet! I thought I should never get it off, it stuck so! But then, papa, that wasn't the worst thing he did. He actually got my scissors out of my workbox, and cut the kitten's whiskers off! You've

no idea, papa, what a dreadful life he does lead us!"

"So, this is your way of going on, sir!" said Frederick's papa, when this awful indictment had been fully read. "And you, madam," turning to his lady, "you think all this wickedness a thing to be encouraged, I suppose?"

"Encouraged! How can you talk such nonsense, Henry? Not at all! I tell Freddy very often, that he shouldn't allow his spirits to run away with him in the manner they do."

"Spirits run away with him, indeed! Tell you what—there's one Spirit, and a very bad Spirit, who will run away with him some of these days, if he goes on as he's going on now! However, to school he goes—after Christmas, at the very latest. You shall go, sir, to a common village-school, sooner than not go at all. I mean what I say," went on Mr. Norton, turning defiantly to the head of the table. "I'm sure there's not a charity-boy alive who doesn't better know how to behave himself. And he shan't come down to dessert; he won't be the worse for that, I'm sure." Which prediction was even more accurately fulfilled than the speaker intended. Frederick cared not for coming in to the dessert, except as his presence involved a personal participation in its dainties. And his judicious mamma bestowed on him, in private, a much larger share of them than would have fallen to his lot in the regular order of things.

We have given, as it was narrated to us, this little family episode, only to point out how the Nortons entangled nearly all connected with them in the evil consequences of that early miscarriage. No wonder they were sometimes tempted to think that a larger penalty was exacted from them than justice required or allowed.

That very afternoon, a letter was put into Ada's hands, which had been addressed to her old home in Kensington, and, by the successor in her house and school, sent on to her abode in Northamptonshire. The handwriting was entirely strange to her, but the Chalfont postmark on it bespoke her especial interest in its contents. Unfolding it, and glancing at the signature, she discovered that the writer was no other than that estimable lady, and our dear and respected friend, Mrs. Smacklebury.

If that lady wanted some of the more

amiable weaknesses of her sex, she had a few qualities which they might imitate with advantage. She could express herself to the purpose. She had written after the following manner:—

"22, Salamanca Terrace, Chalfont,
19th Sept., 1843.

"MADAM, MISS GRENWYL—A very plain but tolerably civil woman, who calls herself Sarah Stubbings, and who has asked me to engage her as a servant, informs me that she lived with you for some time, in the lifetime of your respected mamma.

"May I ask you to be so good as to tell me whether she has any faults? If she *has*, I do not care to know what they are, for I make it a rule of my life *never to take a servant unless she brings a character perfect in every way*. And I have told Sarah Stubbings, that if neither you nor any other of her former mistresses have ever seen anything wrong in her, I will consent to give her a trial. On inquiring about the other ladies with whom she has lived during the last three years, I find that one of them is dead, another has gone out of her mind, and a third sailed for New Zealand. So I can only expect to learn about her during the time she was with you. Will you, dear madam, give me every particular about her, and what she can do?

"Augusta Leonora sends you her respectful love. She will keep the book you gave her as long as she lives. To prevent its getting spoilt, I have never once allowed her to touch it.

"Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald is well, and doing very well, though he is very intimate with the new curate of the Adelaide Chapel, Mr. Alarick. I never think much of a clergyman who smokes.

"With much respect I remain,

"Madam—Miss Grenwyl,

"Your faithful and obedient, &c.,

"JEMIMA SMACKLEBURY."

Ada, not knowing the character of Sarah quite so well as it has been already divulged in these pages, and having never discovered any tangible fault in her, felt able to give her a good testimonial, and Mrs. Smacklebury accepted the offer of her services.

About seven that evening, when the young ladies, her pupils, went down into the dining-room, Ada herself, according to Mrs. Norton's wish, descended to the (for once) well-lighted drawing-room, there to await the appearance of the

ladies, not one of whom (save, of course, the hostess) was likely to be other than a stranger to her.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD LOVE AND NEW LOVE.

THE company assembled in the dining-room, from which Frederick the Guilty was an exile, included Sir William Ripley, the gentleman introduced first of all the characters with which this history has concerned itself. Side by side with him sat Miss Theodosia Martin, arrayed in her favourite costume of scarlet velvet, her cheeks glowing with artificial bloom, though the good-nature that beamed in her face was not artificial in the least. There were a few other guests, with whom I do not know that we need concern ourselves. As the conversation turned on the condition of the peasantry—a matter now rising into general notice—poor Norton thought of the wealth he had irrevocably squandered. None, had his means permitted him, would have entered more heartily into the loftier ideal of a landlord's duty, now supplanting those easier notions of a former generation. He reflected how much happier he would have been could he have but attributed his ruin to cottage-building, church-building, or school-building. As things were, his loss had been the gain of not one single human creature. His most generous desires must be as constantly and as cruelly mortified as any appetite for mere self-enjoyment. He had surely made for himself the very hardest bed on which a man, guiltless of actual vice, has ever been doomed to lie.

The conversation turned (after other topics of the day) to Daniel O'Connell and the threatened insurrection in Ireland. Poor Norton had just been telling the company how he had met Sir Robert Peel a few months ago in London, and the Premier had passed him without speaking, seemingly quite oblivious of their once cordial acquaintance.

"Perhaps," suggested Sir William, "Peel was thinking of something else." And, had courtesy permitted the baronet to add all that was in his thoughts, he would have gone on to say—"And you've grown so bilious and seedy-looking within these last ten years that Sir Robert might have easily forgotten you, if he had all the while been thinking of you and of nobody else."

This brought the conversation by a

natural transition to that man who was pretty sure to be then occupying a very full measure of Peel's thoughts—the great agitator of Ireland.

A bright idea struck the lady of the house.

"Really, now, do you know I shouldn't wonder if they try to prove that he's out of his mind, as they did with M'Naughten. You know it's getting to be quite the regular way now. We certainly do live in shocking times, Miss Martin."

"Oh, dreadful!" assented the spinster, impaling a peach on her silver fork, and beginning to flay it with a silver knife. "Oh, dreadful! What the world will come to next, I'm sure I do not know."

"Yes," said Sir William, "we shall have a revolution ere long, quite after the French pattern, Miss Theo, and I shall set you up in Eastminster Cathedral to be worshipped as the Goddess of Reason."

"Then I do hope that, at all events, they'll cut your head off, you incorrigible, bad man. Why, I do declare, you've gone and filled my glass again! And now I suppose I must drink it, whether I like it or not, you provoking creature! I wish you'd learn to behave yourself."

Miss Martin's complaint of this overthoughtful act was not without some reason. For she had taken wine during dinner with the gentlemen all round. It was her custom to look another way while some friendly hand filled up her glass, and then with a startled "Oh, thank you! thank you!" to arrest the flow from the decanter, just as it reached the utmost capacity of the wine-glass into which it was flowing.

"Never mind, Miss Martin, pray don't drink it if you don't like," said the slow-to-understand Mrs. Norton, while her husband frowned his vexation from the other end of the table at her blunder. With so few friends remaining to them, it was a serious thing to run against the peculiarities of any. But Theodosia was the best creature in the world, and as slow in taking offence as her hostess in taking a hint.

"Thank you, Mrs. Norton," she said; "but you've no idea of the persecution I should undergo for months to come from this naughty man if I didn't drink it. It's the less evil of the two, though it's really too bad, upon my word."

"I suppose, Mrs. Norton," resumed Miss Martin, as soon as she had drunk the wine—"I suppose I shall see your new

governess this evening? How do you find her suit you?"

"Oh, very well, remarkably well," answered the matron, who had quite banished from her mind the little *contre-temps* of the morning. "Really a very pleasing, lady-like young person indeed. Not the least vanity about her, though she must be aware that she's very pretty. Miss Grenwyl her name is."

"Indeed!" said Sir William Ripley, with sudden animation. "You know, Mrs. Norton, when I hear that a young lady is pretty, I need no other particulars to give me an interest in her. But the name of Grenwyl does a little interest me. Can she be any relation to the Grenwyls of Rushton, near Boroughbridge? You must know. The name is not a common one, I fancy."

"Well, really, Sir William, I can't say. Not any near relation, I should think. I never heard her so much as hint that she was of any particular family."

"And governesses, I imagine, seldom leave you in any ignorance of any good connexions they can boast of; and small blame to them, as long as they find such things carry value in the labour-market. However, one of those Grenwyls I speak of married below him—married some lady who could name no ancestor between her father and old Noah, and his family cast him off."

"Well, Sir William, pray ask her if she is of that family; I feel quite curious to know."

When the gentlemen followed the ladies into the drawing-room, Mrs. Norton was not displeased to see the eccentric baronet sit himself down near Miss Grenwyl, and again and again move away and afterwards return to her. To her great surprise, however, when Sir William called for his carriage, he told her that he had left the question as to Ada's origin unasked.

She scarcely knew how to believe him. In the absence of what might have formed a common interest between them, what possibly could have kept those two so long in conversation together?

It was, I believe, the very next day but one after the party, and the morning's work of the school-room was just coming to an end, when Miss Martin, who had come on a fortnight's visit to the house, entered along with Sir William, who had that morning driven over from a house about eight miles distant, and at which he was himself a visitor at present.

"Miss Grenwyl," said Miss Martin, "I have brought Sir William Ripley here, to look at the beautiful view out of your school-room window. You won't think it too much of a liberty?"

And, the governess intimating her permission, the two old friends came in together.

Miss Martin had something to say to the children; and Sir William—you know he would not very well do otherwise—devoted some attention to Ada. And so many times did he interrupt his contemplation of the beautiful prospect outside the window by talking with her, that he was compelled, in mere justice to the scenery, to visit the school-room again in a day or two, and resume his devotion to the picturesque. He came again and again. Ada could not have said whether these visits gave her pleasure on the whole or not. With some oddities, he was a real gentleman; and a surface of eccentricity did not hide (from her, at all events) the sound sense which lay beneath. Still, for some nameless reason, she could not but feel pleased when each interview came to an end. And she did feel, besides, that the last of them would be the pleasantest of all.

He might have repeated his visit some five or six times, and one o'clock, the hour for putting away lesson-books, had just released Ada's pupils, and she was beginning to wonder whether her strange acquaintance would present himself that day also, and wondering withal why she should trouble herself to wonder at all about it, when the door opened, and in came Miss Martin, entirely alone.

"My dear," she said, speaking in rather a flurried manner, though nothing could be more simple and straightforward than her words themselves—"my dear, will you spare me the young ladies for a little while? I want them to look at one or two little presents I've got for them."

And, receiving a ready permission, Miss Theodosia walked away, with the three young girls under her wing, leaving Ada quite alone.

She was not alone very long. The door which had closed on Miss Martin reopened in a very few minutes to admit Sir William Ripley.

He had now come so often in this manner, that his apology for intruding had acquired a slight savour of the ridiculous. He walked to the window, which formed the great attraction, and really

looked out of it steadily for two or three minutes together.

As a dense fog shut out every single thing beyond the gravel-walk hard by, no wonder the prospect absorbed his whole attention.

Ada sat quietly working with her needle as usual.

He suddenly turned round, and spoke to her.

"Terrible work, all this teaching, I should imagine, Miss Grenwyl! Do you know, I've been thinking, ever since we first met, what a horrid life yours must be?"

"I think you go too far, Sir William. I am sure you do. I find it a very tolerable life. Like every other condition, it certainly has its drawbacks."

"Oh! you think every situation has drawbacks? Mine, for example?"

"If you contradict me on your own account, Sir William, you are a most happy and fortunate man."

"Well, but—forgive me, Miss Grenwyl—do you not really feel miserable at times, in thinking how many years you may go on with nothing but this dull life before you? Don't you often think it too bad for a young lady to be treated just a little better than a servant? And I'll be bound that Mrs. Norton thinks herself a miracle of goodness for not treating you a great deal worse."

"Mrs. Norton gives me no cause for complaining of her. Of course, Sir William, it would be ridiculous in me to say that I should have chosen such a life, if I had had my lot to choose. But, as choice had little or nothing to do with the matter, I ought to feel thankful—I do feel thankful—that I have fallen upon nothing worse."

"But, Miss Grenwyl, supposing you had a free selection of all possible states of life? Or, to make the question a little less personal—supposing we all held our destinies absolutely within our hands—what kind of life do you fancy most people would be likely to choose?"

"Why, Sir William, I fancy that, in such a case, most people would spend their whole lives wretchedly, undecided what they should resolve upon."

"Well, then, Miss Grenwyl, if I could inform you of a good situation, a much better one than that you have here—though I am aware you might easily have a worse—one which would put you beyond all anxiety for the future—one in which you need never be thinking, 'What is to

become of me as I grow old?' you would have no hesitation, I hope, in choosing it?"

"You are most kind in taking such an interest in me, Sir William. I scarcely know how I ought to answer you; for, indeed, I am not sure that I quite understand you."

"Then let me give you the address of my situation at once. Should you like the situation—the situation of Lady Ripley?"

"Pardon me, Sir William, but I fear I understand you less than ever now," answered Ada. For in so cool a tone had he put the question, that a literal interpretation of his words appeared of all things the least reasonable.

"Will you be my Lady Ripley? Will you have me for a husband? Do you think it would suit you? You know me by this time quite as much as either my first or my second knew me before they took me for better or for worse. You see me as I am. I might be younger—I would be if I could. I might be taller—I would be if I could. But I'm a widower without children. I've got a very good income; and as to family, though I in my heart think a pedigree a matter to be ashamed of rather than to glory in, I don't mind owning that one of my ancestors fought in the wars of the Roses; and, if history speaks truly, a most enormous brute he was. However, if you want to be assured of your chances of finding me a good husband, why, I've had two wives already, and I'll refer you to their friends and relations for a character. Now, Miss Grenwyl, I trust you quite understand. May I venture to hope?"

"You take an unfair advantage of my position, sir," she returned, indignantly rising from her chair. "You know you would not thus insult the feelings of any lady in your own rank in life. When I became a governess, I did not bargain to be made a butt for the jests of idle visitors, nor can it be ever expected of me."

And she accordingly retreated towards the door; but Sir William hastily prevented her.

"Miss Grenwyl," he said, "pray do me a little justice. It is for me, not for you, to quit the room. In a quarter of an hour I will return and beg an answer. Believe me, I am as sincere in my offer as it is possible to be."

And, throwing open the door, he darted

out, and she heard him rapidly ascending the stairs.

It really did seem, strange and unexpected as it all was, that he had made the proposal in earnest.

Her surprise was thoroughly genuine. Of course, she was not ignorant that she possessed great beauty, nor that she herself had been the attraction which drew him day by day to dawdle by the school-room window.

Not to have perceived this would have been stupidity; but she had never suspected the baronet of any more definite purpose than that of whiling away in her company a few of the hours of his country life.

She had little vanity. Her previous life had been singularly unfavourable to the growth of any such passion in her.

She looked upon her heart as buried in the grave by Chalfont Abbey; and the thought of making conquests was as abhorrent to her as if Cornelius had been still her living husband. Such egotists are we often made by sorrow, that she was ready to think all must know how bitterly detestable any proffer of love or marriage was sure to be to her.

He had said he would come back in a quarter of an hour. He had been gone but a very few minutes, and she was just considering whether she should avoid him by retiring to her own room or (which would be a yet more decided answer to him) by locking the school-room door against him, when that door was hastily opened, and in bustled Sir William's ancient friend, Miss Martin.

"Now, my dear Miss Grenwyl, I know all about it! Don't be angry with me, now. You see I'm of an age to be to you—well, really and indeed I might almost say—like a mother to you! Now I'm going to speak very kindly but very seriously, notwithstanding. It's just this, my dear. You're about the most fortunate young lady in all England, and yet I very greatly fear that you're thinking of throwing all your good luck away."

"Thank you, Miss Martin. I am grateful to you, for I know your intention at least is kind. But I owe no gratitude to Sir William Ripley; and it's much the same to me whether he means it for jest or for earnest."

"Now, now, my dear child! I see you want some one to be a mamma to you, or, if you like, you may fancy me a fairy godmother, like Cinderella, you know, my dear. I know you are angry with Sir

William because he spoke, as I have no doubt he did, very oddly and abruptly. My dear Miss Grenwyl, I know Sir William about as well as any person alive. We've been friends for forty years—well—no—yes—I did know him when I was a very little girl. I know his character most thoroughly. A perfect gentleman at heart, if ever there was one in the whole world! I dare say you fancy that he treated you unceremoniously because you were a governess. I assure you, if you had been the daughter of a duke, he would not have been in the least degree more punctilious—very likely much less so. Ah, my dear! and I know of more than one duke's daughter who would not have needed asking a second time, as you do."

"Then it is a thousand pities their ladyships were not here to-day."

"My dear Miss Grenwyl! why are you so sarcastic? What is there in Sir William that you should be so averse to marrying him?"

"Nay, Miss Martin, not loving him; though I will not doubt his being all that you say, how could I possibly feel justified in accepting him?"

"Why, my dear girl, you never suppose that Sir William expects you to love him as you might love a husband of your own age? Don't think him capable of any such ridiculous folly. He won't expect from you—he's much too sensible a man—anything that you won't find it very easy to give him; and take my word for it, the more you come to know him the better you'll learn to esteem him."

"That might be, Miss Martin. For me to deny that would be very foolish and not a little impertinent. But I dare not think of consenting to marry any man whom I do not really love. If I could even fancy myself suitable to a gentleman of Sir William's rank and position (I will say nothing of his age), I must still decide as I do now. It were a sin in me to consent—a sin against him, for I must promise to love him, and a sin against God, in whose name and presence the promise must be made. I cannot say any more, only I am ready to confess that I spoke hastily and wrongly to Sir William just now. But my heart is not my own; I cannot love and I cannot marry."

"You give me credit for wishing you well, my dear, and that at least is as it should be. Now you may perhaps have heard some things said against Sir William. You may have heard some one

call him a Radical and an infidel. I know they do sometimes. And he really is a most dreadful Radical, it must be acknowledged; but you know, my dear, politics are not things that we women need care about; they don't concern us; and, as he very often says, a man who has got thirty thousand acres of land (only just think of that, my love!), a man who has got thirty thousand acres of land, cannot be very revolutionary at heart. And he really is not an infidel. When he and I were at Chalfont last winter he went regularly to hear the great preacher there, Mr. Fitzgerald. Have you ever heard speak of him? Poor man! He was taken ill and died only three weeks after I left. What a loss he must have been to the place!"

And Ada dropped her head and wept at these words, for she thought what her loss had been.

Poor, good Miss Martin believed that Ada's tears were a signal of determination giving way; and she intimated as much in a few words.

Ada then raised her head again, and told Miss Martin that Cornelius had been her destined husband; and so taken aback was the kind old maid at this strange coincidence, that she hesitated urging her advice any further. In a minute or two Sir William re-entered the room, Miss Martin leaving it at the same time.

He saw that Miss Grenwyl's anger was entirely gone, and he trusted that Theodosia's benevolent office had now been effectually performed. And so he said.

"Sir William," Ada answered, "I must ask your pardon for misunderstanding you as I did just now. I accused you of wishing to trifle with me. I now feel persuaded that nothing was further from your thoughts. Pray forgive me for speaking so rudely and so unjustly as I did."

"Madam, you had every right to be angry. May I hope for your forgiveness?"

"Sir William, I trust I am not insensible to the very great honour you intended for me—one so far beyond the station I occupy, or the life to which I have been accustomed."

"Miss Grenwyl, I know your family to be at least equal to my own, if we must consider such paltry matters. That, then, ought to be no obstacle."

"I am deeply sorry, Sir William, but it may not be. I could not love you, for I have loved another, and he is gone; and

I shall never—I can never—but feel as though I still belonged to him. If I grieve you, Sir William, I greatly regret it, but I should wrong you shamefully did I consent to marry you. May I entreat you to rest content with this answer—the only honest answer I can give?"

"If you require me, of course. So then, Miss Grenwyl, you give me this as your final answer? You will not allow me to hope that you may reconsider my proposal? You forbid me from coming to know your decision at another time?"

"I beseech you to forget me now and altogether; the sooner it may be, the better for both of us."

"Then, Miss Grenwyl, I bid you farewell; you have disappointed me in my desire to form your happiness; but none the less do I wish that you may have happy days in store for you, and that every blessing may ever attend you. Good-bye."

She gave him her hand and he touched it, and was gone. He came to Bloxham no more, as long as his sojourn in Northamptonshire continued. Not many days after, Miss Martin left the Hall for her home at Eastminster. Of Ada she took a mournfully affectionate farewell.

"Matters have not turned out as I and somebody else fully hoped, my dear," she said; "but I do trust that something may turn up in your favour, and that you are not doomed, my dear, to be a governess for life."

And Miss Martin thought about Ada and her most unfortunate resolution all the way home to Eastminster.

She lived in a very old house in the Minster Yard, eastward of the grand cathedral. When it was not excessively cold, Miss Martin regularly attended the daily cathedral service, which, in the morning, began at the hour of ten.

It was a little more than a fortnight after her return, when, one forenoon, about eleven o'clock, and shortly after her return from the Minster, she received an unexpected call from Sir William Ripley.

"Theodosia," he began by saying, "I want you to be quick and come out for a walk with me. Do come directly."

"He wants to talk about Miss Grenwyl," she thought to herself. "Dear me, Sir William," she said aloud. "It's rather early."

"Never mind. I want a walk with you, and nobody else. If we go out after luncheon, we shall be pestered with all

the fools in Eastminster. Put on your bonnet and come at once."

With that acquiescence in his whims, which Miss Martin had imperceptibly learned, she complied; and in a few minutes they stepped outside of the door together.

Across the road, which it separated from the cathedral, lay the Minster Green, the wonted promenade of the gentility of Eastminster.

"No, not that way," said Sir William, checking his companion, as she was about to cross over. "We'll turn this way, and walk towards the field along Dawngate."

Dawngate is a street running north of the cathedral, and on towards the open country; and up this street Sir William and his complacent friend were presently walking. As she anticipated, his first words were about his recent failure in courtship.

"But I trust, Sir William," she replied to his allusion, "that you will get over it in time."

"I believe, my dear, I have got over the worst part of it. Yes, and I shall soon get over it altogether. You will help me to get over it."

They were now approaching Saint Peter's Church. Eastminster numbers three churches dedicated to Peter. St. Peter's-in-Dawngate stands at the back of its churchyard, which opens into the street.

"To change the subject once and for ever," said the baronet; "I've got a letter from the bishop to show you. As the churchyard-gate happens to be open we'll step in, and you shall look at it now."

"A letter from the bishop! Upon my word, you're getting quite a religious character, Sir William! I am delighted indeed. Are you going to build a church, then? I think you ought, with the money you have."

"We'll talk of that some other time. This letter did cost something, to be sure. Here it is for you to look at."

They were now standing on the paved walk in the churchyard, and he took the letter from his pocket, and, unfolding it, placed it in his companion's hand.

"Mercy me, Sir William! what are you thinking of? what does this mean?"

"What am I thinking of? Read his lordship's letter, and you'll very soon make that out."

For the episcopal letter was, in verity, neither more nor less than a formal

and regular licence, permitting William Geoffrey Pontifex Ripley and Theodosia Sarah Martin to enter into the state of holy matrimony, without the delay and formality of banns.

"Now you will not refuse me at the very church door, my dearest one? Here is the licence, and there is the church; and inside is the clergyman. I only acquainted him with it half an hour ago. And my two old servants, Jenkins and Mrs. Bulling, are here to act as witnesses. Now let us go in."

Miss Martin did not draw back. Yet she did not advance. She was really, for the moment, quite unable to stir hand or foot.

"You will not send me away?" pleaded her adorer. "Do you insist on my going through the process, all in due form?"

And, steadying himself against an upright tombstone, he knelt down on one knee upon the grave beside it.

"No, no; pray get up! You'll catch the rheumatism, I feel certain! But oh, dear William, how sudden and unexpected it has all come upon me!"

"Why, we've been courting full twenty years, off and on; allowing for my few fits of temporary insanity. Come into church, at all events; you needn't say 'I will' to the question, unless you like, you know."

But this bride of three-minutes' standing could not yet nerve herself to open the door at which Fortune was knocking so earnestly and so loudly.

"For Cupid's sake, make the effort!" pleaded Sir William. "Twelve o'clock will be coming upon us."

Miss Theo made the effort, and it was made successfully. They were presently in the church and before the table. It needs not that we rehearse the marriage-service, nor inquire what part of it the clergyman may have felt himself right in omitting; but within about eighteen minutes, the baronet and Theodosia emerged arm-in-arm into Dawngate, as safely bound together as the Church could tie them. He had left no time for any rumours to be set agoing, and they attracted as little attention in returning as in going. So they came to her house in the Minster Yard.

"Now, my dearest partner of earthly greatness," said Sir William, as they rang the bell, "will you give orders to Martha to pack up your things directly, and we'll go to Panthorpe at once? I suppose

you'd like to keep Martha as your maid? And can you give us a bottle of that pink champagne to luncheon?"

"Oh, to be sure, Sir William; there's some of it left still. You gave it me, and now it's yours again, and everything else I have, too. Oh, goodness me, to think of it!"

When they got in, the order was given to Martha accordingly.

"And be very quick about it, Mrs. Martha, if you please," added the bridegroom. "We are going to Panthorpe Hall—my house, you know—at once."

"Lor, sir! What you and Miss Martin?—you and my missis?"

"Let me impress upon you, my good Martha, that there's no such person as Miss Martin present. The lady whose shawl you helped to put on a little while ago—this lady—is now my Lady Ripley; and mind, every time you speak to her, you call her 'my lady,' or I shall take the very nice husband I intend to give you and marry him to somebody else. Now get upstairs; her ladyship wants you, I know."

"Oh, dear, miss—ma'am—my lady, I ought to say—is it really true? You'll forgive me, but I hardly know how to believe it."

These words came gasping out of Martha's lips, when she had followed her mistress into the bedroom.

"Well, indeed, Martha," said that mistress, "I myself scarcely know how to believe it. Yes, I suppose I haven't been dreaming, and it must be true. We've been to church, and gone through the proper service, and Sir William put the ring on my finger—here is the ring, you see, sure enough. Well, I shall be glad for you to remain with me, Martha, and I hope you will."

"Oh, thank you, miss!—thank you, my lady! You'll pardon my saying that you've kept the secret uncommonly well."

"Secret, Martha! not I. I had no secret to keep. I do assure you, when Sir William called this morning, I had no more idea he was going to marry me than that he was going to marry you."

"Well, to be sure, miss—my lady, I ought to say—every one talks of Sir William as a funny gentleman, but I never knew how funny his ways were until now."

"Hush, hush, Martha! Remember Sir William's your master now, and mine too, for that matter."

"Oh, my lady, I don't mean that he's gone and done anything which isn't very right and very wise. I'm sure he couldn't anywhere have found a better lady, look where he might."

"Come, come, Martha, that's flattery. I know very well that Sir William might have done very much better any day; and people will laugh pretty well at us both, I'm fully aware. However, my duty will be to show him that he might perhaps have chosen worse."

And then the conversation turned upon the packing-up, with especial reference to the safe conveyance of the scarlet velvet.

Just as the baronet and his lady were pledging each other at luncheon over the champagne, there dashed into the Minster Yard a carriage with four horses. In this they were to be driven to Sir William's residence, Panthorpe Hall. The horses and the postilions (there was no end to the baronet's grotesque inconsistencies) wore white satin favours, and all the vicinity were startled and bewildered at the unaccountable phenomenon. As her new-made husband handed her in, Theodosia nearly felt forty years to be annihilated. We are earthly creatures at the best, and in our most ethereal moments this material is wont to pin us down. And some of her youthful buoyancy may certainly have been attributable to the pink champagne. But her thoughts flew back to the time when she was a pretty girl of twenty, and Sir William a dapper beau of twenty-five. She had had hopes of her own then; they had fallen away from her with no agonizing wrench, but with a calm and slow decay. And lo! their dead ashes had bloomed into sudden life after many years.

They whisked round the south-west corner of the cathedral, and clattered out of the town by an archway that saw the days when Roman colonists in Eastminster burned incense to Jupiter and Juno. In spite of the shortness of the days (for October was now nearly ended), they reached Panthorpe long ere it was dark. A little detachment of tenantry and all the servants were waiting to pay homage to their new lady, whom Sir William, just before starting that morning, had fully prepared them to expect. The master of the house gave them rather a funny little speech, as he stood in the doorway of his mansion. It made his poor Theodosia completely bury her countenance in her muff. And, lest any of my lady readers may be as sensitive as she was,

I shall not transcribe it from the written report I have before me on my table.

They lived together for fifteen years—fifteen quiet, amicable, benevolent years.

They spent a little time in London, a little more at Chalfont, but the greater part of the year they lived at Panthorpe Hall. They played together—I have heard it calculated—three thousand games of cribbage, besides two thousand games of dummy whist; and traversed the globe's diameter in the sum of their *tête-à-tête* walks. Nor has even death divided them. Six weeks after following Lady Ripley to her grave, Sir William followed yet one step further, and laid himself down beside her.

So, side by side, in the vault of Dingleby Church, they rest together, his two former brides resting there along with them. And the marble tablet above tells, with no false tongue, of the regrets which followed Sir William and Theodosia, and of the homely excellence of their good old age.

Side by side, they await the signal of departure to that country where there is neither marrying nor living in marriage, neither can they die any more.

Peace to their ashes! Honour to their memories! We wave them a farewell, and go back to trace the story of others, who are yet mingling in the stormy waters of life.

CHAPTER IX.

ONCE MORE AT CHALFONT.

It is dark November, and Chalfont is filling once again with visitors establishing themselves for the winter. We will, if you please, follow the tide of fashion, and go thither at once; dropping in upon an old friend with all the abruptness our previous acquaintance may warrant in us.

Mrs. Smacklebury and her daughter were seated alone at an early tea—so early, that it was not yet altogether dark.

They were in the kitchen, but in a kitchen so beautifully clean, that the most fastidious of Chalfont's fine ladies would hardly have thought it an uncomfortable place.

Notwithstanding, the person who had the best right to take pleasure in its neatness, looked anything but happy; and, for several minutes, she sate watching in grim silence the answering gloom reflected by her daughter.

"Now, I tell you what, Augusta Leo-

nora," she at length broke silence by saying:—"If I catch you sitting there much longer, with that grumpy look upon your face, just as if you hadn't every blessing you can wish for, I'll take you out, and soundly whip you, and finish my tea in comfort afterwards, you little discontented monkey! and, so now you know."

Poor Augusta Leonora took a rapid plunge into the depths of her inner self, to look (like a diver groping for pearls) if she could find and bring to the surface one single cheerful thought. Her mamma stimulated the effort by some further discourse addressed to her.

"Pray, Miss Augusta Leonora, have you considered what's to become of you, if these troubles bring me to my grave, as I sometimes think they will? I suppose you think, when I'm once dead and buried, that you'll get your own way with your papa! You wicked hussy! To entertain such thoughts! And so you would—so you would come over him in fine style, I'm well aware! But, I'll just tell you, Miss, that you're reckoning without your host in that. I shall make it my dying wish, that he sends you away from home to the very severest school he can find for you. You shall never be left to your poor weak-minded papa, if I can prevent it."

The troubles, to which Mrs. Smacklebury alluded, as likely to shorten her life, were not quite imaginary ones. They had commenced a very little while after the arrival of Sarah, who had formerly served Mrs. Grenwyl, and who had now been with Mrs. Smacklebury for several weeks. They consisted in the unaccountable disappearance from the store-room of certain more or less valuable articles. But by far the greater part of the annoyance consisted in the new sense of insecurity, and in the feeling that (for the first time in her life) some one had found the means of baffling her.

Augusta Leonora slept exactly over the store-room, and her mother insisted that, with such an advantage, she might and ought to solve the aggravating mystery. And most dreadfully was the poor child made to suffer for what her mamma chose to consider guilty and wilful ignorance.

"So I suppose," went on her mother, "that if I ask you again who's been at the things, you'll go on telling me that you don't know."

"Indeed, mamma, I do *not* know," said the prisoner on the rack, with the faintest

tone of remonstrance. "I'm sure I would tell you if I could; but indeed, it's not me, mamma; and I can't think who it can be—I try, but I can't."

"And, pray, what comfort on earth does it give me—you sitting there, munching your bread and butter, and saying: 'It's not me mamma.' You indeed! No, I think I see *you* up to any such tricks! You'd barely escape with your life, if I did catch you at it, my good madam. So that's settled as soon as said. But, I can tell you one thing; you'll have to pay for the things—and you well deserve it—now look here," and Mrs. Smacklebury pulled out of her pocket a piece of written paper;—"look here! every article I miss I put down, and the value of it. And, every penny—mind, *every penny* you get from your aunt, or any one else taken from you to pay for what I lose. If you don't look sharp you'll be as old as I am before you know what it is to have a farthing. This is what I've got against you already: half a Dutch cheese, one and fivepence; pork-pie, one and threepence; orange marmalade, one shilling; jar of oriental pickle, four and sixpence. There!"

And then Mrs. Smacklebury allowed her tongue a few minutes' rest, recruited herself with another cup of tea, and then began again.

"So there you sit, and have no comfort whatever to give me. Upon my word, Augusta Leonora, but I do feel desperately inclined to turn you out into the street. Of what earthly use are you to me that I should keep you here in all this luxury and comfort? It'll come to that much sooner than you think for. As I once heard Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald say, I shall give you 'the key of the street.' There you'll go up and down, chattering with cold and with no bed to lie on but the hard pavement. A pretty sight you'll be for all the people of Chalfont! and not one of them will pity you, or take you in. Nobody will blame me. I shall stitch a paper to your back with 'Wicked and ungrateful child' written upon it! so every one will see that you deserve it. There, miss, how will you look then?"

However she might be expected to look then, the child now looked as if thinking whether the wintry streets might not have their own peculiar advantages. Just then Sarah came home from the errand on which she had been sent, and to her Mrs. Smacklebury resigned the labours and emoluments of the tea-table.

"Come! get up from table," she said

to her daughter; "I'm not going to give you any more. You've had fifty times as much as you deserve already. Wash your greasy fingers in the slop-basin, and dry them upon the jack-towel."

The poor little girl obeyed with a readiness which ought to have won her some favour had the grievance against her been of the soundest and gravest kind. Her mamma only acknowledged her compliance with two thumps and one slap, and a renewal of the old style of exhortation.

"I find this wicked minx as hardened as ever, Sarah. She can't—that is, she won't—tell me who it is that's robbing me. Could you have believed such wickedness in a child?"

"No; that I never could, indeed, ma'am. She's quite a disgrace to human nature!"

"You hear that? You hear what the world thinks of you, you little child of wrath!—A disgrace to human nature. But it's not this house you'll disgrace very long. Get to bed with you—get anywhere so as I don't see you. And if you don't very quickly amend your wicked ways, Augusta Leonora, I will turn you out of my doors. I feel it to be a Christian duty."

"One really does feel as if one could sit down and cry over such a character, mum," said Sarah, as the child went out at the door with the world's ban thus laid upon her.

"Yes, indeed, I should think so. But don't suppose you are going to waste your time in that manner, for I've lots of things for you to do; so be quick and get your tea over."

"But only do hear, ma'am," as the sobs of the retreating victim were borne in upon their ears; "I do believe she's agoing into hysterics on purpose for to aggravate you, ma'am."

"Get your tea, if you want any. Don't talk about hysterics in this house! I should very soon cure her of that. I'd have a good bucketful of water and hold her head downwards in it until she was well. That would be the end of hysterics with Augusta Leonora, or with you either; and a pretty good long ending, I imagine. Shut your mouth and get your tea, woman."

Which order, contradictory in the letter of it, but quite practicable in the spirit of the words, Mrs. Sarah no longer delayed obeying. Before she had finished a ring came at the front door.

"I'll answer the bell; you stay where you are," said Mrs. Smacklebury, who had lingered in the kitchen dusting some china, and she went up the stairs at once. She found at the door a youthful-looking gentleman, whom she had never to her knowledge beheld at any former time. He was somewhat roughly and singularly attired, otherwise there was nothing at all extraordinary about him. Mrs. Smacklebury recalled that fatal visit of Maurice Fitzgerald many months before, and she resolved to be careful about admitting this stranger, if admission he should desire.

"I believe," he said, "that the Reverend Ananias Alarick lodges in this house?"

"No, sir; indeed he does not," she answered, in a tone implying that the house was more honoured by the absence than by the presence of the gentleman in question.

The stranger looked seriously puzzled and annoyed.

"Indeed! Is not this Mrs. Smacklebury's? — number twenty-two, Salamanca-terrace?"

"Yes, sir; this is my house, and I am Mrs. Smacklebury. If you want Mr. Alarick, I can tell you where you will find him. He did lodge here some time ago, but he and I did not agree; and of course, there could be but one ending to that. He lives at number thirty-nine, Copenhagen-street; third turning to the left, and then first turning to the right."

"Thank you; I thought he lived here. He wrote his last letter from this house."

"I'm sorry you find him such a bad correspondent, sir. He left this house two months ago, at the very latest."

And the door was slammed back again, and a bare pane of imitation-oak shut out the radiant vision of Mrs. Smacklebury.

The young gentleman walked away in the direction she had indicated, and within a few minutes was admitted into the house which really did own Mr. Alarick for a resident.

"Yes, sir; Mr. Alarick's at home," said the girl who opened the door to him. "Will you please to walk upstairs? There's no one but Mr. Fitzgerald with him."

The visitor, instead of moving towards the staircase, took out a letter and a card, the former of more than the average size.

"Will you," he said, "take these up to him, and ask if I can see him?"

She complied, and went upstairs with the letter and the card in her hand. The former was addressed thus:—

"Rev. Ananias Alarick,
"22, Salamanca-terrace,
"Chalfont, England."

The card bore printed on it:—

"Mr. Richard Grenwyl,
"Orange-park,
"Barbadoes."

The claimant of the above style and title was not kept waiting very long.

When the maid came downstairs after delivering her message, she was closely followed by Mr. Alarick, who came to greet the visitor at once.

The Rev. Ananias Alarick deserves—both on his own account, and for the importance he will presently acquire in our story—to be somewhat exactly described.

Let me endeavour to paint him accurately, and the rather as I draw not from imagination, but from very painful memory.

A tall, upright, and rather muscular figure; a dark treacly complexion; a pair of eyes that beamed with a dull sneering roguery; but the truly representative feature was the mouth, its protruding lips expressing falsehood, impudence, treachery, and sensuality, in a type so easily legible that you might almost question whether you could complain of being taken in by him. Unless physiognomy be as baseless as alchemy or astrology, "Dangerous" was written on the countenance of this man, so that all might beware of trusting him. But many left this warning unheeded, and the wisdom offered them for nothing they purchased at a very costly rate indeed.

Of that career of sponging and swindling, which has long ere this left him a hopeless bankrupt in character, it falls not within my province to give the full history. How he got one hundred and fifty pounds from the Cape Horn Missionary Society, as his outfit for a mission which he never undertook after all; how he found a resource for his own needs, at one time in the produce of a charity sermon, at another in the little fund of a parochial sick-club; how these and many other like things were at first solemnly denied, and then unblushingly acknowledged before the Bankruptcy Court, from which even his exhaustless knavery could not protect him in the end; how when his last rag of respectability had been torn away he bid

for notoriety by assuming the leadership of a great London strike in the building trade,—all this is foreign to my present purpose, and occurred several years after he had ceased all connexion with any one else in these pages.

In the smile of this man there was a kind of mock benevolence. He strutted about as if believing himself the source of happiness to all in company with him. "All this great felicity," he seemed to be thinking to himself, "is of my contriving and of my conferring. You might be more sensible of it than you show yourselves, yet I grudge you not what I have given; and, little as your gratitude may be, I shall still make it my pleasure to promote your utmost bliss."

Such was the appearance, such the demeanour, and such (as events went to prove) the character of the clergyman who now descended into the passage to welcome the young gentleman, whose card had borne the name of Grenwyl. He proffered a greeting intended to be cordial, and which, very likely, was accepted as such.

"Pray walk upstairs," he said; "you won't mind my having a friend with me? Only a young gentleman from the bank here; comes to pass the evening with me now and then. Very glad indeed to make your acquaintance, and to welcome you to old England. Do come up."

And up the stairs together they went. The parlour occupied by the Reverend Ananias was on the first floor. The first thing that struck the visitor was the presence of two clay pipes, a pitcher of hot water, a couple of tumblers with spoons in them, a basin of loaf sugar, a dissected lemon, and a decanter with a clear paleish fluid inside it.

The next thing which he noticed was a young man of rather attractive appearance, who, from lounging on the sofa, rose up as the stranger entered.

Mr. Alarick introduced his two guests, little knowing of what strange events this interview was the beginning and how near those events were at hand.

"Mr. Grenwyl, a friend and connexion of mine from Barbadoes—Mr. Fitzgerald."

Richard Grenwyl and Maurice Fitzgerald shook hands, and the former accepted his host's invitation to sit down and make himself at home.

He was very young. He could hardly be much over one-and-twenty at farthest. He was not healthy-looking. The some-

what sallow tint of his face might be the fruit of long residence in a West Indian climate. But beyond that there was a delicate and fragile appearance about his whole frame, arguing a constitution which could not be wisely trifled with.

"When did you get to Bristol?" was (naturally enough) the first question put to him by Mr. Alarick.

"Only this very morning; I spent a few hours in looking about me, and then came on at once."

"You feel it cold, I should think, coming to England? Though in England, we consider Chalfont a very warm place."

"Yes, rather. I was born in England, as of course you know, but I was so young when I left it that I can't remember it at all."

"Well! and how's my venerable uncle?"

"Thank you; my father's as well as usual—at least, I left him so."

"And he really thinks of marrying again—the third time! Well, I haven't read his letter yet. I'll read it now. Fitzgerald, you'll excuse me, I know."

And, having provided his Barbadoes guest with a tumbler, Mr. Alarick opened and read the letter from his uncle. We may as well read it with him, first explaining the connexion of its writer with the bearer of it.

Doctor Alarick, a physician of great ability, and (though he had such a nephew) of excellent character, had several years ago found England unsuited for his health, and had gladly accepted a professional opening in the Isle of Barbadoes. The known salubrity of that island might appear to promise little advantage to a physician; but the numbers of delicate people who flock thither both from Europe and from America ensure that, in Barbadoes, the medical calling shall not be a mere profitless sinecure. Shortly before leaving England, he had married the widowed mother of Richard Grenwyl. She left the doctor a widower about two years before the time of which we are writing now. She had been his second wife. His first consort had left him two daughters, who were now married, one in Barbadoes and the other at New York. Richard had been his mother's only child by her first husband, and none of her children by the second marriage lived beyond their infancy. Dr. Alarick had been a very good stepfather to young Grenwyl, as well as an excellent husband to his mother.

The lady whom he was about to take for his third wife was a Barbadoes lady, and sister to the husband of one of his daughters.

Richard Grenwyl had no reason for dreading the marriage as likely to interfere with his prospects. He had now become heir to a considerable estate in England, which the death of his paternal grandfather, occur when it might, would place in his immediate possession. And it was on this account he had come to England, a country entirely strange to him, although it was the land of his birth, and the land with which his fortunes would henceforth be intimately connected—the land, moreover, in which his family possessed a name and a local habitation for some five or six hundreds of years.

His stepfather's letter was written as follows:—

“Orange Park, Barbadoes,
“18th October, 1843.

“MY DEAR NEPHEW—The last year or two has been, as you know, fraught with several changes in our household here. Both my daughters have been married, and now Richard is invited to England, and under the circumstances it is really necessary that he should go. His grandfather's death may, at any time, call upon him to enter on the large family property, with all its attendant honours and duties. Therefore, glad as I should have been to keep him here (for I have quite grown to regard him as one of my own children), I cannot but feel that the sooner he becomes accustomed to English life the better for his future career.

“Yet it is not without some anxiety that I shall see him depart. In the first place, I am not altogether easy as to the effect upon his health which the change of climate may produce. He will reach England at the commencement of a (possibly) severe winter. And it is partly on this account that I have urged him to visit you at Chalfont before he goes on to his grandfather's place in Yorkshire. The Chalfont air will be a kind of break in the change from Barbadoes to the north of England. His health is not good, and I heartily wish he had been sent to England for his education; but his mother's natural fears for him stood in the way. I have another reason for wishing him to cultivate your acquaintance on his first landing. He cannot be very deeply attached to his grandfather, whom he does not remem-

ber, and who, I am well assured, would never have taken much notice of him but for the events which have unexpectedly made him heir to the estate. And being a stranger in England, his first thought will be to see London, and his youth and inexperience may draw him into evil, from which the presence and counsel of a friend as near his own age as you are may serve to help him. I have commissioned him to place in your hands a sum of money, which may cover any expenses thus incurred by you.

“You will have heard already, I imagine, that I propose very shortly again to enter on the married state. Will not that stimulate you to the like step?”

“But, very probably, your fate is already determined. As a clergyman, and in such a place as Chalfont, too, you have rare opportunities; use them to the best advantage.

“Richard will convey to you a few little tokens of my affection and goodwill. I have sent a case of humming-birds, which, peradventure, will one day help to adorn the drawing-room of Lambeth Palace! I have not forgotten a few of the less poetic products of our islands, and have sent you a jar or two of guavas, &c., &c., not forgetting some of our turtle.

“I remember that when I last saw you, some sixteen years ago, you were ill with eating too much jam. I hope (though you must long ago have put away such childish things) that you retain sufficient of your old predilections to relish the few things I have sent you.

“I wish I could indulge the idea of visiting you in England; but I see no present prospect of it. I could not live in any place likely to afford an opening in my profession; and to leave my practice here, though for only so long as to enable me to visit my own country, would be really to abandon it altogether.

“Apart from the separation from our English friends, this is a delicious island, and agrees with me exceedingly well. I trust that the lapse of ten or twelve more years will make me independent of my profession; and then, if spared so long, I shall go back to England, and settle somewhere in Devonshire, or, it may be, in the Isle of Wight. I could live there, though not in London. When you marry, you must make a long honeymoon, and come to us in Barbadoes.

“You cannot imagine what a comfort it is to me that Richard (for whose wel-

fare I am deeply anxious) will have the benefit of your counsel and friendship. He is amiable and well-disposed, and very easily led: a quality, good or evil, according to the character of his companions. As I said, he has a delicate constitution, and (this I say in strictest confidence) a not very vigorous intellect. He must avoid excitement, if his life is to be a long one.

"Let me hear from you as frequently as is convenient to you,

"And believe me,

"My dear Ananias,

"Your ever affectionate uncle,

"PETER ALARICK."

This letter was welcome enough to its receiver, especially on account of the gift of money to which it alluded, and which was to defray the charges of a possible excursion to London. It proved to be (considering its nominal purpose) a very liberal present indeed, and the three young gentlemen (Ananias, the eldest of them, was not over six-and-twenty) spent a very social evening together.

The Reverend Mr. Alarick told several anecdotes of a character best described as indescribable. He had an exhaustless fund of such-like anecdotes. The pleasure of repeating them to a new auditor was one of the greatest, but not *the* greatest charm of his existence. His utmost delight of all was to pour them into the ears of some listener of the opposite sex. This, with safety to his own reputation, could very seldom be done.

Now and then, however, he did contrive to launch his impure stories on a female audience. He had an intense pleasure in getting together a female Bible-class, and, under colour of speaking with due force and plainness, abashing them with some immodest commentary on the holy book. How the wretch would chuckle as he beheld each outraged hearer hiding her face in both her hands!

But to keep to our story. A trip to London was a treat which he had long been desiring, but which, from shortness of cash—for smoking and whisky-drinking cost money—he had all the while craved in vain.

So he proposed that they should go—Maurice included—for a week's pleasure in London the ensuing Monday.

Grenwyl caught gladly at the idea. Two days (it was now Thursday evening) would suffice him to see the sights of

Chalfont, and make sundry purchases of clothing, which his change from a warm to a cold climate made particularly important. So he would go to London on the Monday, and after a few days' lionizing, to his grandsire's mansion in Yorkshire. He and Maurice grew great friends in the next few days. On Fitzgerald's dull life this new acquaintance broke like sunshine on a February day.

Nearly every single hour of their five days in London had been planned beforehand by them, ere they started, in company with the Reverend Mr. Alarick on the Monday morning. Great—nay, terrible incidents were to come, and that very quickly, of this excursion, and we shall presently have to record them. But we must now go back to Ada; for to her likewise, little as she might dream of it, the approaching catastrophe was fraught with deep and lasting consequences.

CHAPTER X.

SOMEBODY CALLS ON ADA.

"A GOVERNESS for life!" Miss Martin had used those words in all kindly feeling when expressing her wish that no such dismal destiny might be awaiting Miss Grenwyl. But they weighed rather heavily upon Ada's mind. What, indeed, could she expect all her life through, save to continue earning her bread in the occupation of a governess? That might be no great hardship as long as she had the strength for it, but what was to become of her should her health fail? Her early self-dependence had given her a habit of looking *forward*, which you may deem scarcely graceful in one who had barely got out of her teens. But her refusal of the rich baronet had shown that, if careful and practical beyond her years, nothing would she purchase at what she deemed a sacrifice of truth. But Miss Martin's last words had set her thinking about her future prospects. They extended before her much like the prospect which on the last day of that October met her eye, turn whichever way she would. It was a dull unvaried grey overhead, and withered leaves were dropping on to the damp earth all around her.

She was walking up and down the garden, an old-fashioned garden full of sturdy evergreens, many of them the heroes of a hundred winters. It was a "pleasaunce" (why have we not retained that word in familiar use?) which, with a

little money and a little taste, would have smiled in the face of the dreariest English weather. Ada was walking alone. School hours were over, and in the same garden, at a little distance from her, the girls were driving their hoops up and down the weedy walk. Frederick had gone into the village to spend in lollipops the halfpenny which, as black mail, he had just been levying on his sisters. So Ada was at full leisure to think of the rather startling news which she had heard only that morning—the marriage of Sir William Ripley and Miss Martin. She had done well to refuse him; of that she had never doubted, and less than ever could she question it now. Nevertheless, the brilliant lot she did not repent of refusing made the darker, by its contrast, the dull monotony in which, to all seeming, her life must henceforth wear itself away.

Ada had certainly known what it was to feel more sorrowful, but never had she known greater depression of spirits than when, on that cold foggy day, she paced up and down the dreary garden. The house which now held her she could never come to regard as her home, nor knew she how soon increasing embarrassments might compel the Nortons to place their governess on the retrenchment-list. Mrs. Norton was always hinting that only the strictest economy enabled them to retain such an appendage to their family. Of what, in any case, Ada thought, must her life consist? Very likely, of a long and dismal succession of changes from one household to another. And thus, more homeless than a wandering Arab, who carries his tent from one wilderness to another, she must work away the twenty, thirty, or forty years—as long as her strength would endure, and society was content to consider her not too old for the occupation. Then, should no untoward event a second time bring her to ruin, she might be at liberty to go away somewhere and die—not of starvation.

"And perhaps," she then thought, "one or two ladies will be found who will think a little of their old governess, and give her an occasional welcome at their homes."

But the thought was not a very comforting one. At twenty years old, our air-built castles, take what shape they may, never assume the form of an almshouse for old age. Ada was not a prematurely aged woman; she was only a saddened, thoughtful girl. And she was just now strongly tempted to ask what

good the life before her was likely to do her?

She was startled out of these gloomy meditations by the appearance of her three young friends, who suddenly came running to her all together, as if under the excitement of some unexpected event.

"Miss Grenwyl! what do you think?" said the eldest and foremost. "There's a fly just driven up to the door! I wonder who it can be! May we just go and look?"

"No, my dear, that's rude, you know. It'll be time enough to go in when you're wanted. I don't think it's anyone coming to stop here. At least, I didn't hear your mamma say that she expected anyone."

With so few arrivals, an unexpected visitor was a great event at Bloxham Hall. The children bustled about the garden in a fever of ungratified curiosity. Ada continued near them, very little interested in the matter just then absorbing all their thoughts.

In a few minutes, the man-servant was seen to enter the garden, evidently charged with some special mission; but it was to Miss Grenwyl he spoke—it was Miss Grenwyl whom the mission concerned.

"If you please, miss," he said, "there's a gentleman come, and wishes very particularly to see you, if you please; and missis said I was to ask you to come in, and the young ladies were to come in by-and-by, she said."

"A gentleman wishing to see me!" exclaimed Miss Grenwyl, now curious in her turn. "Do you know his name?"

"No, miss, I don't. He's an oldish gentleman, dressed all in black, and rather shortish. You'll find him in the dining-room, if you please, miss."

A gentleman, shortish and rather old! But it certainly was not Sir William Ripley; for his appearance was familiar enough to every servant in that house. Whoever the visitor might prove to be, to go to him in the dining-room at once was a far more likely way of solving the mystery than to stand puzzling it out on the gravel walk. So into the house she went, and a moment or two after had entered the dining-room and was face to face with the gentleman who had requested her presence.

He was, as he had been already described to her, somewhat short, was attired in black, and, to all seeming, was rather old. He was certainly unknown to her. Nor could she remember ever

to have heard of any person with whom she might identify him. He looked a real gentleman, though his black shorts, his frilled shirt, the immense seal, which dangled from his waist by a broad black ribbon of watered silk, as well as the courtly bow with which he greeted her, all betokened a man whose manners had been framed on models now almost forgotten by the world.

"This is the first time," he began by saying, "that I have had the honour of addressing Miss Grenwyl, but it is impossible that my name may not be altogether unknown to her. Allow me, madam, to introduce myself as Mr. Markby."

Not perceiving any trace of recognition expressed in Ada's face, he went on to explain still further.

"I have, for many years—I might indeed say, during my whole active life—been the confidential adviser of your grandfather. I am well aware that circumstances have kept you estranged from him—a thing to be exceedingly regretted; but I had thought you might possibly have heard my name mentioned by your mother. I had some occasional correspondence with her."

A moment's further reflection brought to Ada's mind the remembrance that she had heard her mother mention Mr. Markby. And so she at once told him.

They were now both seated near the fire.

"You are aware, Miss Grenwyl," he then said, "of the great affliction with which your grandfather has been visited in the course of the last two years? I allude, of course, to the losses in his family, following, as they did, one after another."

It was painful to have to confess to such total estrangement from her father's family. But Ada had no choice but to reply that she had never heard any news of them, good or bad, since her first recollections.

Mr. Markby looked astonished.

"I had no idea," he said, "but what you sometimes heard of your family, if not from them, Miss Grenwyl. However, your grandpapa greatly desires to put an end to this long estrangement, and it is on his behalf I am come here to-day. Then you are actually not aware of the melancholy series of events which have happened in the family, and which may one day concern you very nearly indeed?"

"No, I have never had any communica-

tion with my grandfather or any other member of my poor father's family. But I am not, on that account, indifferent to what concerns them. I am deeply sorry for them, though at present I do not quite understand you."

"I will explain at once, Miss Grenwyl. You know that your father was your grandfather's fourth son. Your eldest uncle was married, but never had any children; consequently, the two sons of his next brother—your uncle Edward—were always looked upon as the ultimate heirs of your grandfather's large property. They both died within six months of each other, and their father had died a year or two before, and your uncle Godfrey—your eldest uncle, you know, followed your two cousins within a year afterwards; so that now your grandfather's heir (the estates being strictly entailed) is your cousin Richard, the only child of his third son. Mr. Richard Grenwyl's father died when he was quite a child, and his mother married a Doctor Alarick, and went with him to Barbadoes. Mr. Richard has been brought up in the West Indies. His mother is dead, and his stepfather is going to be married again. As your grandpapa is now advanced in years, Miss Grenwyl, and much broken in health, I regret to say, it is very desirable your cousin should come home (I say 'home,' for the house he is to inherit must surely be so considered) as soon as possible. He is at this time on the voyage, and, if all goes well, will arrive at Rushton in the course of next month. Should any untoward event—I hear his health is decidedly delicate—should any untoward event snatch him away before he has an heir of his own, the estate would be vested in the issue of the next son—that is, of course in yourself. What I have told you may have somewhat prepared you to hear that your grandfather earnestly wishes you to forget the past, and come to Rushton and live there (as long as it pleases Heaven to spare him) as one of his family, which, indeed, you most entirely are."

There was a war of contending feelings in Ada's heart. This summons to a new and altered life came to her just when she had been feeling most intensely the dulness of the present. A light had broken upon the gloom which had looked so impenetrable but a minute or two before. Could a kind Providence have more manifestly interfered in her favour? Still Ada had some pride, more perhaps

than she ought to have had; and she did feel something within her prompting her to refuse the overture, made, as it was, by one who never ought to have treated her as a stranger.

Mr. Markby noticed her hesitation, but he a little misinterpreted the cause of it.

"Mr. Grenwyl," he went on to say, "particularly asked me to assure you that you need have no anxiety for the future. He has the power, and he will most certainly exercise it, of leaving you a tolerable provision whenever it pleases Heaven to remove him. A large fortune he cannot leave you, but he will leave you far above all necessity of returning to this mode of life—one, I believe, which few young ladies find a pleasant one."

"Oh, I was not hesitating on that account,—I hadn't a thought of that; but will grandpapa be really and truly pleased to see me?"

"As I am thankful to say, that, in spite of his advanced age, your grandfather still retains his eyesight, I may assure you that he will, Miss Grenwyl."

This was prettily said, but it did not meet the resisting point in Ada's heart.

"I trust"—her new adviser went on—"that you will not refuse, Miss Grenwyl. My long acquaintance with your family (I well remember your papa as a boy) must plead in excuse for me if you think me impertinent in thus urging the matter upon you. Your Aunt Margaret, who lives at Rushton (she has never married), will be most bitterly disappointed if I return without you. Had it depended upon her, I am sure that this invitation would have been given you long before now."

The mention of this aunt, whose name she had scarcely ever heard before, stirred up new and softer feelings in Ada's mind. Her aunt might be utterly innocent of the harsh decree which had banished her parents and herself from out of the Grenwyl circle.

Nay, she might have contended against it, and bitterly mourned over it. She pictured to herself the gentle womanly daughter striving, by every pious stratagem, to overcome her father's implacable anger. Would it be a Christian act—would it be a righteous act, to rob that aunt of a victory so worthily sought, and (very likely) so hardly won?

So Miss Grenwyl quickly made up her mind to accept the home thus tendered her by her father's father; and she pro-

mised, if Mrs. Norton would consent to so abrupt a termination of their engagement, to accompany Mr. Markby into Yorkshire the very next day.

When Mr. Norton came into his dressing-room to wash his hands previous to their three o'clock dinner, his wife told him of the great event which threatened to rob them at once and for ever of the services of Miss Grenwyl, ending with hearty lamentations that they could not keep Ada in the house until John, their eldest son, came home for the Christmas vacation.

"Just the thing," she said, "which we have always said would be the salvation of the family—John to marry a lady of property. What a thousand pities! If one could only know what's going to happen beforehand."

"But do you mean to say that Miss Grenwyl has become a lady of property?"

"Why—not exactly that; but at her grandfather's death, and if anything should happen to her cousin, she would come in for eight thousand a year."

"If anything should happen to her cousin; and when her grandfather dies! Just look how you go building castles in the air, madam! I should have thought you had had enough of that—expecting this thing and that thing. See what such folly has done for us already."

"Well, that's true enough; but you shouldn't talk as if it were all my fault, Henry. It's unkind of you—it's very unkind of you indeed."

"Heaven bless and keep the woman!" exclaimed Mr. Norton in a tone as if he were somewhat weary of keeping the woman himself—"did I say that it was all your fault? If you choose, I'll allow all the fault to have been mine; but we've had quite enough of that sort of thing, Elizabeth. The best we can do is to bear our troubles as we can, and say the least we can about them. Let Miss Grenwyl go at once, if she wishes it. I'm sure I'm very glad of this change in her prospects, for her own sake."

"Well but, Henry, we might keep up a friendship with her, and see how things turn out. I'm sure I've tried to make her happy here, and I don't think she can complain of anyone in the house, except Frederick—wicked little monkey! As you say, he must and shall go to school after Christmas. As for poor John, I shall impress upon him, as I always have done, that he'll just ruin himself entirely if he marries any lady who is not very

rich. I shall do my duty in that respect, at all events."

Mr. Norton muttered something which his wife, as she was already quitting the room, did not hear; and it is just as well she did not, for its purport was, that if John, or any other unmarried man, knew what it was to be tied to a woman, it would take a great sum of money indeed to make him consent to any such slavery as wedded life.

Mr. Markby accepted the proffered hospitality of the Nortons, and stayed with them for the rest of the day and for the night. About ten o'clock on the ensuing morning he, with Miss Grenwyl and an elderly female servant whom he had brought with him, quitted Bloxham Hall; and Ada was on the journey towards her new and untried home.

THE WINTER'S CHARMS FOR ME.

LET poets write, and let painters dream,
And let sweet-voiced maidens sing,
Of the summer's prime, and the autumn time,
And the balmy hours of spring.
But, if I might choose, it should be my theme
Of the winter's charms to boast,
When the bright fire glows, and the red wine flows,
At the name of some favourite toast.
Then here's a health to the winter gay,
When Christmas comes with his bright array;
When loved ones gather around our board,—
A wealth more dear than the miser's hoard.
O these are the scenes that I love to see:
O the winter's charms are the charms for me!

O the spring is fair, and the summer is bright,
And the autumn times are dear,
For the yellow sheaves, and the falling leaves,
Whisper that winter is near.
But more precious to me, with his mantle of white,
Is the monarch who rules 'mid the snow:
While icicles shine like a diamond mine
On the evergreens twined round his brow.
Then here's a health to the winter gay,
When Christmas comes with his bright array;
When loved ones gather around our board,—
A wealth more dear than the miser's hoard.
O these are the scenes that I love to see:
O the winter's charms are the charms for me!

O 'tis charming to watch on a bright spring morn
The buds of each opening flower,
Or to list to the song of the woodland choir's throng,
In the summer's ripening hour;
Or delighted to gaze on the golden-tinged corn,
On a stilly autumn eve;
But as lovely, I trow, are the bright wreaths of snow
The frosts of December weave.
Then here's a health to the winter gay,
When Christmas comes with his bright array;
When loved ones gather around our board,—
A wealth more dear than the miser's hoard.
O these are the scenes that I love to see:
O the winter's charms are the charms for me!

M. W. M.

POPULAR PHYSIOLOGY.

PART VIII.—NERVOUS DISEASES.

IN giving some directions for the treatment of "Nervous Diseases," I mean to confine myself to those which are not of a very grave or difficult character, and which may in their slighter forms be treated (for a time at least) in a domestic way. At the same time, I hope my readers will not so far forget or overlook the scope of these papers as to allow themselves to be misled by them into a negligence of resorting to personal medical aid in time, or by keeping cases in their own hands too long, call down upon themselves the reproof of the practitioner to whose assistance they may be at last obliged to resort. So far as I have gone, I have reason to be grateful to very many correspondents whose letters have reached me, the majority of whom very wisely have been satisfied with adhering to my directions in the treatment of the simpler forms of disease; and, once for all, to save trouble and time, I beg leave to say that I cannot undertake to go further than I have done and am doing, and must be excused for declining to prescribe for particular cases by letter, or at all to interfere with the treatment of others, or even to give an opinion on it, as by doing so I should act unprofessionally and unwisely both. The many applications which have reached me require me to say so much.

Probably one of the most troublesome and even agonizing forms in which nervous disorders can visit us is that termed "neuralgia," which differs from hysteria and other forms of disease by being attended with *pain*, and which consists of pain and nothing else, as the attack is often without inflammation, or fever, or any change of structure in the painful part, so far, at least, as we can perceive. In obscure cases, too, the difficulty of making out the cause and origin of the nervous pains is, that they may be produced by some source of irritation operating at a distance from the part in which the pain is felt. Sir Benjamin Brodie has collected a whole mass of illustrative cases of the production of nervous pain by irritation situated in a distant part; and as a familiar exemplification we may instance, that if you

strike the inside of the elbow in a certain way, so that the force of the blow lights upon the ulnar nerve, a peculiar tingling sensation is felt, not exactly in the seat of the nerve so struck but in the sentient extremity resident in the little finger. The source of irritation may be in the trunk of the nerve, from which the part complained of is supplied with nervous fibrils; or it may go farther back still, and depend on a diseased state of the spinal marrow or of the brain. Sometimes, again, irritation applied in the course, or at the extremity of *one* branch of a nerve, will give rise to pain at the extremity of *another* branch of the same nerve, and thus the sensation appears to be reflected, as it were, along the branch which is not directly the subject of the irritation. Thus disease or irritation of the liver may be accompanied with pain in the shoulder, through filaments of the phrenic nerve; pain may be felt in the left arm from disease of the heart; and in the ankle from indigestion, as related by Sir B. Brodie, who gives the case of a gentleman who awoke in the middle of the night with a severe pain in the foot, and took a large dose of alkaline medicine, as he fancied that his stomach was acid; in fact, it was so, and scarcely had he swallowed the alkali when his pain left him. It may thus be that attacks of neuralgic pain may have many sources, and that a long and difficult search may be necessary before we can positively lay our hand on them and be at all certain of the result.

There are certain forms of neuralgia, however, which are very common, and which occur in all parts of the body, although more frequently met with about the head and face than in any other; if the head alone be affected it is called *hemicrania*; if in the facial branches of the fifth pair of nerves, we term it *tic-doloureux*, and as these branches are three, sometimes all of them may be affected and sometimes only one. Everyone who ever felt such a visitation knows it to be intolerable. The teeth, the chin, the side of the tongue, the eye, and even the nose may be the source of torture, which is

brought on by the most trifling causes, such as a slight touch, the blowing of the air upon the face, the movement of the muscles in eating or speaking. Sometimes it is attended with some obvious disorders of the digestive organs, and if so, such disorder ought to be combated at once by a warm aperient draught with a sedative; and sometimes it may prove to partake of the nature of a rheumatic attack; and sometimes upon the general state of the system, particularly in females. Under any circumstance, and proceeding from what cause it may, it is very frequently a disease difficult and tedious to get rid of. In fact, no single drug or plan of treatment can be relied on in aggravated cases, until we are certain that we have accurately diagnosed the cause of the evil—the source from whence it proceeds. In slight cases the external application of laudanum and camphorated spirits of wine (equal quantities) shaken on toasted flannel and applied as hot as it can possibly be borne, coupled with a twenty-drop dose of chlorodyne or Battley's sedative liquor taken internally, will generally relieve the anguish; but in more serious cases all such remedies must be laid aside, at least until we are pretty certain that we have gained a correct clue to the cause of the sufferer's complaint. Our first care therefore must be to investigate particulars, before we proceed with what are called "specifics," which, after all, may give added torture instead of relief. It may happen that the origin of the disease is plain and the remedy obvious. It is not often that we find a very plethoric person affected with "neuralgia;" on the contrary, those subject to its attacks are generally feeble or delicate, and under such circumstances the remedy most recommended for its radical cure is iron—the *carbonate of iron*—as prescribed by Hutchinson and Elliotson. This medicine is supposed to cure by increasing the quantity of red corpuscles in the circulating blood, and thus give firmness to the nervous system in general. Nevertheless, before this remedy is tried, it is of the greatest consequence that the state of the digestive organs should be attended to; Mr. Abernethy always insisted that in patients who suffer under this cruel disorder, the digestive functions and the nervous functions are both out of order, and that it is rather a hopeless attempt to cure either without attending to both. Now, as a tonic, we have already mentioned iron as that most likely to be use-

ful; and as an aperient, Sir Charles Bell was accustomed to rely on the following pills, which he found particularly useful: extract of colocynth thirty grains, croton oil two drops, and compound galbanum pill a drachm; this was to be made into eighteen pills, and three to be taken at bed hour. As an external application, among those found to give most decided relief, probably the following one may be found efficacious: three drachms of tincture of iodine, and four drachms tincture of aconite, mixed and rubbed to the part affected night and morning. Chloroform also is a trustworthy remedy, and is likely to give relief. In severe *face-ache*, Dr. Watson mentions that he has very often given the most decided relief by giving half-drachm doses of *muriate of ammonia*, dissolved in water, and taken three or four times a day.

Hemicrania, or nervous headache, occupies generally the brow and forehead, or at all events confines itself to one side of the head. Like neuralgia, it may arise from many causes, and very generally annoys delicate hysteric women, particularly when they nurse children too long. Iron is the best remedy for it, or a combination of iron and bark, such as the "citrate of quinine and iron," which may be taken in five-grain doses three times a day, or the plain sulphate of quinine in two or three-grain doses, or, in fact, as much as the stomach will bear when the pain is periodically violent.

Sciatica is another and a very crippling variety of nervous disease, which is often so obstinate as to require a succession of remedies. Although sciatica arises from the sciatic nerve, and therefore is to be classed as a nervous disorder, still it is sometimes accompanied with considerable constitutional disturbance, and puts on the appearance of an inflammatory complaint: in such cases leeching, cupping, and blistering must be resorted to, together with attention to the bowels and a perfect state of rest; sometimes it wears more a rheumatic appearance, in which case calomel and opium followed by bark and iodide of potass will be useful; sulphur sprinkled on flannel and rolled round the limb is rather a popular remedy; and in protracted cases I have seen great benefit received from small doses of the extract of Indian hemp, beginning with quarter grain doses or even less three times a day, and so going on to the extent of half or three-quarters of a grain for the dose. Probably, however,

the carbonate of iron is, after all, our best chance, and certainly ought always to be tried liberally when there is no reason to suppose that inflammatory action is going on.

Another very troublesome and afflicting kind of nervous disease is *hysteria*, the protean forms of which are very numerous, and exceedingly necessary to study accurately, lest we might mistake one disease for another. In its most violent form—that is, in the shape of hysterical paroxysm or fit—it sometimes so far resembles epilepsy as to be mistaken for it, and this error is a very annoying one both to patients and their friends. The difference, however, is well marked and easily distinguished, particularly when the fit is over, as in epilepsy there is entire loss of consciousness, and on recovery the patient remembers nothing that has passed; while in hysteria the loss of consciousness is seldom complete, and the person affected can generally both hear and notice what is going on. The convulsive movements also are much more violent in epilepsy than in hysteria, and the class of patients are constitutionally different. Females are almost always the sufferers in hysteria, and its attacks usually occur between the ages of fifteen and forty; neither is it very often that a regular fit occurs, although in women of feeble or sensitive temperaments matters are often on the borders of such a calamity, and are sometimes relieved by copious floods of laughter or of tears. The worst of it is for practitioners, however, that the hysterical temperament is prone to mimic other diseases, and thus for a time to baffle both their science and skill. It may simulate abdominal inflammation, or heart or liver disease, or regular *palsy*—a very afflicting form—or *aphonia* (sudden loss of voice), or mock laryngitis, or cancer of the breast, called “hysterical breast,” or lung affection, of which the cough is peculiar and resembles a bark more than a cough, or spine disease, in which the patient complains of pain and tenderness in the back, and ultimately takes to her bed and lies there for years, it may be under the impression that she cannot walk, simply because she is afraid or does not choose to try—in point of fact, there is hardly any known disease which hysteria has not been known to imitate, exceedingly to the annoyance of experienced practitioners, who well know what is before them, and sometimes to the wonder and

puzzlement of younger hands. Besides, we find at times that real disease may be masked or accompanied by hysterical symptoms, and in treating the latter the former may be overlooked. At the same time, it is not easy to lay down rules for all such supposable cases, and all that can be done is cautiously to investigate, in order to arrive at the truth, by which means all serious error may be avoided. One thing, however, is quite certain, namely, that hysterical disorders may be much more easily prevented than cured. On this head Sir Benjamin Brodie's remarks are invaluable to the heads of families and the guardians of growing girls. “You can render,” he says, “no more essential service to the more affluent classes of society than by availing yourselves of every opportunity of explaining to those among them who are parents how much the ordinary system of education tends to engender a disposition to those diseases among their children. If you would go further, so as to make them understand in what their error consists, what they ought to do, and what they ought to leave undone, you need only point out the difference between the plans usually pursued in the bringing up of the two sexes. The boys are sent at an early age to school, where a large portion of their time is spent in taking exercise in the open air; while their sisters are confined to heated rooms, taking little exercise out of doors, and often none at all, except in a carriage. Then, for the most part, the latter spend much more of their time in actual study than the former. The mind is over-educated at the expense of the physical structure, and after all with little advantage to the mind itself; for who can doubt that the principal object of this part of education ought to be, not so much to fill the mind with knowledge, as to train it to a right exercise of its intellectual and moral faculties; or that, other things being the same, this is more easily accomplished in those whose animal functions are preserved in a healthy state than it is in others?” This is sound and wholesome teaching, and deserves to be studied by the class to whom it is particularly addressed.

As to the treatment of hysteria, a great deal must depend on the nature and violence of the attack. In a hysterical fit or paroxysm, the patient should be unlaced and freely exposed to cool air; when able to swallow, a tea-spoonful of

ammoniated tincture of valerian, in water, or a draught with ether, chloric ether and twenty drops of laudanum, in camphor julep, should be administered, together with wine or brandy-and-water, while smelling salts or burnt feathers should be applied to the nostrils. When health in some degree returns, the treat-

ment must be altogether a tonic one, consisting of wine, meat, bark, steel, and a liberal use of the shower-bath, the open sea, the carriage drive, and a gallop over an open country, if possible.

We shall conclude the subject of nervous diseases in the next number.

KING ALFRED:

A TALE OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

It was the grey of early morning, just the chill and melancholy hour which precedes the visible rising of the sun, and a keen and cutting wind was sweeping over the marshy and moorland, surrounding a few detached huts, scarcely worthy the name of a village, called Athelney.

At the door of one of these lowly dwellings stood two figures, both anxiously looking forth into the grey light, as though endeavouring to distinguish some beloved or expected form. Both were females; the eldest a woman of tall stature and stately presence, whose hair was white with the snows of sixty winters. Her garments, of coarse woollen material, were of common make, but worn with a certain dignity and ease which seemed to express that the mind of the wearer was of no common mould. Her face was very pale and thin, her bright blue eyes restless and tearful, and the clasping and loosening of her folded hands told of the mental tumult which existed within. By her side stood a young girl of not more than sixteen or eighteen summers, a fair and fragile-looking being, seeming at the first glance but ill-fitted to encounter hardships and sorrows; but the keen observer, on a closer view, would have noted that in the broad high brow, serene eyes, and steadfast look of the maiden, which told of courage and unwavering and undaunted resolution. Her garb was not only like her companion's, of coarse texture, but was worn and scanty; and the pale and careworn expression of her face seemed to tell a tale not only of mental anxiety, but of bodily privation.

"Some evil has happened, Myra," said the elder female; "he was never yet so late—his rash daring surely has led him into the hands of the Danish wolves."

"Nay, noble Osburga," returned the

maiden, "let us not yet despair; the want we have of late suffered, and his ill-success in obtaining food yesterday, may have led him to take a wider circuit in quest of it to-day."

"Oh! Alfred, my king, my son," exclaimed Osburga, fervently, "what a fate is this for thee! Yet, outcast as thou now art, Heaven's justice surely slumbers not, and ere long shall thy sword replace thee on thy throne to be a blessing to this devastated land."

"Hist, lady!" cried Myra, "surely I see forms moving on the brow of yonder hill;—yes, surely, it is he!"

"'Tis but a neatherd, child, driving some cattle," returned her companion, despondingly.

"Nay, gracious lady, it is King Alfred's form and bearing—I am sure it is he;" and with rapid step the girl hastened to meet the approaching traveller.

Her conjecture proved correct, and, in a few minutes, Alfred, weary and dispirited, crossed the threshold of the hut which formed his shelter and hiding-place. Greeting his mother with mingled reverence and affection, he answered to their sad and inquiring looks—

"Again unsuccessful;—do not weep, my noble mother. I must seek our sustenance to-day in the pools and ditches, and again turn fisherman for us all. I have been, since I left you, within a very little distance of the Danish camp—would to Heaven I could get within, I might be better able to judge of the chances for me, could I venture another battle."

Myra, who, while he spoke, had been endeavouring to raise a flame on the rude hearth, looked up. As he ceased speaking, a glance of earnest intelligence flitted across her features, but she ventured no

remark; and Alfred and his aged parent, over their scanty and coarse repast of oaten bread, exchanged sorrowful retrospections of the past and anticipations of the future. But the mind of the king was by no means destitute of hope, even under the difficulties of his present circumstances; and, mingling with his manly and noble regret for the trials of the present, were bright dreams of a future day—when, under his auspices, learning, religion, and refinement, might bless his native land—when commerce might arise, and the semi-barbarism and degradation of the long oppressed country give place to the blessings and the arts of peace.

With deep solicitude he questioned whether any of his little band of followers, who had been driven with him into Athelney, had been heard of during his absence on the previous day. But all had been quiet; and Alfred, grieving for the hardships they must necessarily suffer, pined still more for the ability to aid them by an active resistance to their common foes.

The eyes of Myra glistened as she stood silently listening to the converse of the royal pair, and the desire to aid the plans of her sovereign arose in her mind. To her, thought of personal danger never occurred—or, if it did, was banished as of no moment, in comparison with the stake at issue; and she resolved to make the hazardous attempt to penetrate to the Danish camp, and obtain some information of the movements and forces of the enemy. But, knowing that if her intention was communicated to Alfred it would be at once frustrated, she remained silent, and throwing a cloak upon her shoulders, and muffling her head and features in a hood, she prepared to leave the hut.

"Whither now, fair Myra?" inquired the king.

"I must seek a fresh supply of firewood ere the day be far spent," she replied, "and the present hour is the best and safest."

"Poor Myra," rejoined Alfred, kindly, "we are strangely circumstanced that thou, a noble's daughter, and my royal mother's best beloved friend, shouldst have to stoop to such menial offices. Nay, stay, child, do not go—remain with my mother, I will seek what thou needest."

The tears rose to Myra's eyes, and an almost irrepressible emotion rendered her

voice tremulous, as, kneeling at Alfred's feet, she kissed the hand he had extended to raise her; and, briefly combating his arguments, turned and vanished from the cottage.

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There were light and revelry in the Danish camp—the beams of the setting sun being replaced by the glare of torches, which shed a lurid light over the scene. Here and there were scattered groups of half-clad, half-armed warriors, fierce and repulsive in their appearance, carousing merrily, and chanting wild and barbarous lays. In the centre of the encampment was a tent of larger dimensions than the rest; from its top floated the Danish banner, bearing the Raven—their national emblem, and believed by them to possess magical properties. Around the tent were assembled a number of the chieftains of the party—some of whom were conversing gravely, others joining in the noise and revelry around. Suddenly a group of armed men crossed the encampment, and approached the tent;—as they did so, one of the loungers accosted the leader.

"Well, bold Oswin, what success hast thou had? How many kine have fallen tribute to thee? Whom hast thou there? A captive! and, by the ring of Odin, a fair one—let us see her, brave Oswin."

"Hold, Eric," replied Oswin, sternly, "touch not my captive, I must take her before Guthrun, it may be she may know somewhat of this English king who has as yet escaped us. Give way, I say!" and pushing through a group whom curiosity had drawn together, the Dane hastily entered the tent with his fair prisoner.

It was a large but rude chamber (if a space of ground curtained only from the sky, and possessing no furniture or decoration, save a rough table, a bench, and a variety of warlike implements, could be so called); at the table stood a group of men, grim and stern-featured, to the tallest and sternest of whom, Oswin at once, and without ceremony, presented his young prize.

"Who is this, Oswin?"

"A stray maiden whom we stumbled on to-day, noble Guthrun," was the reply; "her language is not that of the boors of this place. Is it not possible she may know somewhat of the British king?"

"True, valiant Oswin," said the chief, bending a look of mingled sternness and interest on the trembling girl before him;

"who art thou, maiden?—what art thou called?"

"I am called Myra, noble sir," replied the captive; "I am poor and helpless, and was but gathering wood for fuel, when these rude men seized me—I beseech you let me return to my mother, who will weep my absence."

"Softly, my fair one, we let not such birds escape when once caught. Leave her here, noble Oswin, I will question her further anon."

"Nay," said the Dane, "I leave her not here, Guthrun, she is my lawful prize, and I will venture her in no man's charge—question her as thou wilt, but she departs hence with me."

The face of the chief grew white with passion, and for a moment he grasped the handle of a huge battle-axe which lay beside him; but a glance from Oswin seemed to alter his purpose, and, relinquishing the weapon, he drew him aside, and urged upon him, as it seemed, other and more pacific inducements to forego his claim. These were long resisted; but at last apparently successful, for Myra's captor departed, leaving her with the stern and ferocious group—amongst whom she beheld no face which beamed with pity, not one to whom in her terror she could look for counsel or aid.

They questioned her of her residence, occupation, and of the current rumours respecting Alfred; and, even amid her fear, she possessed the courage to give evasive answers; so that the Danes became at length convinced of her ignorance on the all-important subject, and one by one left the tent—until at last Guthrun alone remained with his captive, whose heart beat painfully as he approached, and taking her hand he led her to a bench, and seating himself beside her, gazed long and earnestly upon her.

"Thou fearest me, maiden?" he asked, after a long pause.

"I do," she replied, frankly; "but I beseech thee, noble Guthrun, harm me not! I will serve thee as a vassal, truly and faithfully—but spare me—oh! spare me."

"Listen," said the Dane. "Years ago, I had a daughter, as young and comely as thyself, and, when we first planted our banner in this land, some of thy people captured her. They showed no mercy to her, and she soon died—say, shall I not have revenge?"

Myra answered not, but taking a dagger from the ground, offered the weapon to

the Dane, and, kneeling before him, lifted an imploring and yet fearless look to his face.

"Take my life, then," she said, "and let my blood be an offering to your revenge!—I fear not death."

"Nor shalt thou meet either death or dishonour here, Myra," replied the chief, raising her—"I saved thee from Oswin's power, and will not harm thee; but free thou wilt never more be. Rest content—my daughter, not my slave!"

* * * * *

Days passed away, and still the mirth and revelry went on in the Danish camp; but grave looks began to be worn by the elder chieftains, and serious consultations were held in the tent of Guthrun, where Myra was still an attentive but unnoticed listener. Much she heard that she would have forfeited life itself to have been able to have conveyed to Alfred, but escape was impossible; and anxiously she saw the days go by, and felt that her adventure had been useless to him whom she had perilled so much to serve. One occupation served to render her captivity less tedious—this was the communication of the principles of Christianity to her heathen master; and the harsh and sombre features of the Dane would relax and soften, as the sweet voice of his adopted child pleaded the pure and gracious precepts of her own religion, as opposed to the ignorant and blood-stained worship of the heathen Odin.

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The noon-day banquet was just ended, and the wine-cup circulated freely among those who crowded the tent of Guthrun, and song and jest arose—when the attention of Myra, who sat at her master's feet, was attracted by the entrance of a minstrel, who, harp in hand, entered the tent, and, bowing lowly, commenced a wild and martial song. The harper appeared to be an old and feeble man, but something in his voice struck Myra so forcibly that she with difficulty restrained an exclamation of surprise and joy. His song was received with acclamations by the revellers, and hour after hour passed away in the enjoyment of listening to his music. When night closed, Guthrun himself invited his further stay, and permitted him to sleep beneath the outer tent—an inner tent or division being appropriated to the chief and his own household. When the night had fallen, and all around her lay hushed in repose, Myra stealthily

arose, and with noiseless steps sought the couch of the minstrel. The moonbeams fell through the opening of the tent on the hard resting-place assigned him, and showed her, too, that he was awake, and listening.

"My lord Alfred," she whispered—"oh! why hast thou ventured here?"

"Why art *thou* here, Myra?" returned the disguised monarch. "We mourned thee as lost, and lost indeed I fear thou art."

With rapid words Myra related the purpose she had had in view in approaching the Danish encampment, her adventures, and finally her success in ascertaining much of vital import to Alfred's interests.

"A battle has been fought, my lord," said Myra—"two Danish chiefs, Hubba and Biom Ironside, have been encountered by the men of Wessex, defeated, and slain. Their magic banner, the Raven, has fallen into the hands of our people—and the Danes here are dispirited and weakened by superstitious fears. All this I have learned, and am assured of; and thankful am I that I am permitted to tell it to your ears."

"My lion-hearted girl," said Alfred, warmly, "this indeed is news worth even such a venture as thou hast made, and will decide my future course. But here thou must not stay, Myra—return with me?"

"Nay," interrupted the maiden, "I am watched and guarded—I dare not venture an escape. Depart thou, my lord, as quickly as may be; and I will pray in my captivity for thy success, and may be soon *my* deliverance also."

For three days the supposed minstrel lingered in the Danish camp, gaining much information of their numbers and proposed movements; but on the fourth day, when called for to amuse the assembled warriors, he was not to be found. His departure excited neither suspicion nor surprise, the visits of the wandering gleemen (as they were termed), being of common occurrence, even in the camp of an invading enemy.

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Weeks sped onward, and still no fresh movement took place in the Danish army under Guthrun. Entrenchments were thrown up, and provision made to secure the safety of their present position, but the news from without was still of evil import to them, and Myra's heart beat with renewed hope as she beheld the

evident perplexity and failure of courage among the enemies of her country. But if the Danes were inactive, not so King Alfred. Summoning his followers, they entrenched themselves at Athelney, and providing there for the safety of their families, and being joined by the men of Somerset, their bold and active leader at length marched against the invaders. Pausing on the verge of the great forest of Selwood, he unfurled his banner, and from every surrounding quarter his subjects flocked and gathered beneath it. The tidings of Alfred's approach reached the Danish chief, and, assembling his army, he prepared to march against Alfred, but ere his plans of operation were well matured, the lances of the Anglo-Saxon warriors appeared on an opposite eminence, and a battle was inevitable.

On Myra's heart the din and preparation of battle fell with strange power, and a longing desire for freedom now possessed her, with the desire to remove her suspense and anxiety by being a witness of the eventful struggle. On his departure Guthrun had commanded her to be strictly guarded, but in the excitement and turmoil which reigned in the Danish camp, she contrived at length to escape unobserved, and under shelter of the night to reach the threatening armies. She beheld the outstretched line of her fellow countrymen, stern and eager to save their land from a foreign yoke—she beheld, on the morn of battle, Alfred, her king, the one for whom she had perilled more than life, and for whom her heart beat with reverence and love inexpressible, advance to the front of his troops, and evidently address them in powerful and exciting language. He ceased, and from their ranks rose a deep and solemn cry—the cry for liberty or death!

There was a moment's silence, a movement in both armies—and then a shower of arrows fell upon the Danes, and the first shriek of death resounded. The English and British lances were next hurled against their adversaries, and then the armies closing were engaged hand to hand. Long and murderous was the conflict, the plain was strewn with the dying and the dead; Anglo-Saxon, Briton, and Dane, lay mingled on the red and trampled sward. The plain was intersected with low bushes, and two or three half-ruined huts stood upon its verge, and from the shelter of one of the latter Myra watched the chances of the day. Yet upon the king alone was her interest centred;

she beheld him, first in the battle, setting an example of unflinching courage to his followers; she saw the threatening battle-axe above his head, the spear at his breast, and could have shrieked in her terror, but the blow was evaded or parried, and again she breathed. At length she beheld a tall and powerful Dane in combat with Alfred, who eagerly defending himself, by degrees was driven from the ranks of his own army, and left alone; the Dane pressed on him, several joined in the attack, and Myra, with feelings amounting to agony, beheld her sovereign driven towards her hiding-place, and apparently sinking beneath accumulated blows. Suddenly, a fresh opponent attacked him, the gigantic Dane poised and raised his heavy two-handed sword. The blow descended, not on its intended victim, but on the head of Myra, who, sinking at his feet, poured out her heart's blood for her king, and lifted her expiring eyes to the face of Guthrun, her horror-stricken and unintentional murderer.

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Ere the day closed the English were masters of the field, and the Danes were driven within their entrenchments. Closely blockaded by Alfred's army, dispirited, and ere many days starving—the Northmen at length submitted, and negotiated a peace with their conqueror.

Alfred, wise and prudent in his successes, as patient in his adversities, saw the policy of investing his conquered foes with some subordinate power, and Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, and a portion of Essex were ceded to them, as tributary vassals to the English king. On Guthrun the tragical death of Myra produced a deep and lasting impression. The stern warrior mourned the death of his adopted daughter with silent but ceaseless remorse, and shortly after assuming the reins of his new government became a professed convert to Christianity, many of his subjects likewise embracing that religion. For a time peace hovered again over England. Alfred, the just, wise, and great, struggled earnestly to advance his country in all the peaceful attainments of science and literature, and while defending his harassed country from the incursions of predatory invaders, laid many a foundation for future triumphs of learning, wisdom, and law, and under the auspices of this, the greatest of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs, the seeds of future blessings were sown, never to be rooted out, or utterly destroyed. To this admirable lawgiver we owe many of our most valuable and time-honoured institutions, and principles of liberty and justice, which endear the name of Alfred to every British heart.

THE COUNTRY OF THE AMAZONS.

DR. JOHNSON said it was possible, though not probable, that amazons existed. Since the doctor's time we have learned that they do exist, under conditions very similar to those ascribed to the amazons of classical story. They are warlike—indeed, they are soldiers, regularly trained and set apart for the terrible work of war, and they never marry. Nominally, however, they are the wives of the king's old soldiers, and are sometimes, for distinction in the field, given in marriage by his majesty to his favoured subjects. This may account in some degree for the extraordinary bravery exhibited by the African amazon at all times, as the king's wars are always of a commercial nature—carried on not to avenge insult or injury, but purely for the purpose of capturing victims for the slave trade. The king is closely interested in the success of his arms.

In fact, as Commander Forbes remarks, the royal nigger Gueza is king not only of Dahomey, but of the slave trade and its merchants in Africa; and it is on this account, for the extravagant cruelty that prevails in his dominions, and for that peculiarity of enlisting an army of women, that he is as widely renowned as any monarch in Europe, almost. His dominions are not small. Lying inland on the Guinea coast, they extend from the banks of the Niger almost to those of the Volta; and his rule over this territory is a reign of terror. Terror to us, that is to say; for his majesty's subjects appear to be of so barbarous and blood-thirsty a nature, that a mild rule would be impossible.

Dahomey has been a military nation, and little else, for two centuries; but it was not till the present monarch usurped the throne (his brother was deposed for unmilitary conduct, which, probably, means some vague love of peace and humanity) that the kingdom became so distinguished. Now it has subjugated all the surrounding country; and should any neighbouring people become rich, or numerous, they are swiftly brought up by a declaration of war from the king of Dahomey. Thus it is that on the western and north-western side of the country, the stream of the Volta alone separates Dahomey from the great rival monarchy of Ashantee; while on the eastern side

devastation has been carried on as far as it is convenient to march an army, even on the profitable expedition of a slave hunt.

It is easy to imagine the consternation of a feeble state lying in the ascertained direction of his majesty's march. The inhabitants, instead of congratulating themselves upon the "royal progress," and congregating to witness the imposing cavalcade, immediately endeavour to evade all chance of personal encounter, and to make themselves and their property as scarce as the limited period at their disposal will admit. "Cowries" (the current coin of these realms), cooking pots, and children, are rapidly secreted in the innermost recesses of the jungle. Young wives, whose value to a Carolina cotton-grower would be nearly equivalent to that of a five-year old dray-horse in Barclay and Perkins's stables, are hurriedly concealed in the depths of recondite caverns. Troops of lads of about the age and size of Oxford undergraduates, though infinitely more desirable in the eyes of a Brazilian merchant, are hastily driven from the paternal home to save them from the pitiless invaders. Meanwhile, each unfortunate elderly gentleman, whose infirmities preclude his escape, begins to feel peculiar discomfort in the region of the Atlas, knowing that his coveted pericranium is of the precise value of nine shillings to any soldier of the king of Dahomey, for the adornment of the royal scullery, and will shortly be disposed of, without the possibility of his having a voice in the transaction, by a summary and most unpleasant process.

We remember a painful instance of the sudden onslaught of this barbarian host upon a flourishing town on the banks of the Quorra river. The assizes were proceeding at the time. A learned and venerable judge, assisted by a black but intelligent bar, was unravelling the intricacies of a complicated case. The proceedings had attracted more than ordinary attention, and a very numerous and grave audience, but all in that simplicity of attire which characterizes the statues of ancient Greece, and the robins of England.

The counsel for the defendant had closed a long harangue in the harsh and unmusical dialect of his race, when sud-

denly an unusual agitation was perceivable at each avenue leading to the overcrowded court. Neither the sheriffs nor his assistants were able to restore order. The confusion increased; and the worthy judge was finally compelled to yield to the pressure from without. For a few moments the cause of the interruption was not ascertained; but when the astounding fact transpired, that an overwhelming army of the Dahomans had surrounded the court-house, and that all attempt at resistance was vain, it is impossible to describe the uproar and dismay that ensued. The enemy were not long in turning their advantage and their prisoners to account. In a few minutes the judge and jailer, both as nude as at their birth, were handcuffed together; the angry plaintiff, his unpaid witnesses, and his leading counsel, the jury, attorneys, and members of some of the oldest and most respected families in the vicinity, were manacled in pairs, marched under a strong escort to a convenient spot, and there sold by their captors to their monarch, at prices averaging from eight to twelve shillings a couple. In twenty-four hours they were all as closely packed as figs in a drum, in the hold of a Yankee slaver, whose fortunate owners cleared an enormous profit upon the transaction. By such cheerful and lucrative pastimes, the tedium of the Dahoman winter is beguiled, and the amiable prince thus recruits alike the energies of his people and his own exchequer.

The delights and the profits of war keep the population of Dahomey down to about 200,000, of both sexes; and Abomey, the capital, has not more than 30,000 inhabitants; of the whole population, not more than 20,000 are free—the remainder are slaves. The regular army numbers about 12,000, of whom 5000 are amazons. When the king goes to war, he levies in all about 24,000 men, and an equal number of commissariat followers; then he moves on his war-march, with nearly 50,000 of both sexes, or one-fourth of the whole population of the kingdom.

"In the months of November and December" (says Commander Forbes, from whom, and from the narrative of Lieutenant Bouet, of the French navy, we compile this article), "the king commences his annual wars. For three successive years his people have asked him for war upon a particular place; and he marches forth, concealing, until within a

day's march, the name of the place against which he has brought them. Against the devoted city his troops march, whilst the king, nobles, and royal family remain encamped. Daylight is generally the time of onset, and every cunning, secrecy, and ingenuity is exercised to take the enemy by surprise. After the destruction of a town, notice is sent to all neighbouring *cabooceers*, or chiefs, calling upon them to swear allegiance to the conqueror. Many do so at once, and receive their original rank, with an equal, a Dahoman, to act as coadjutor; the remainder are persecuted till subjugated. On the return from war, in January, the king resides at Cannah, and what is termed 'makes a fetish,'—i.e., sacrifices largely—and gives liberal presents to the fetish people, and, at the same time, purchases the prisoners and 'heads' from his soldiers; the slaves are then sold to the slave merchants, and their blood-money wasted in the ensuing 'custom,' *Hwae-nooeewha*, as the great annual feast is entitled in Dahoman parlance. Of these 'customs,' the most important is that held in March, and called the *See-que-ah-hee*, at which the king's wealth is profusely displayed. That which is held in May and June, is in honour of trade, with music, dancing, and singing. A small schooner on wheels, laden with gifts, is then drawn round the capital, and the cargo afterwards scrambled for by the Dahoman army. August and September are occupied by preparations for war, serving out powder, balls, or gun-stones (small ironstones), and much palaver on war subjects. Before going to war, the king makes a 'custom' to the memory of his father, which generally lasts a month; and thus ends the year, keeping the nation in a fever of excitement, dancing, singing, haranguing, firing, and cutting off heads; thus demoralizing more and more the natures of a people already amongst the most barbarous of the African nations."

Thus war is annual—or rather, an annual slave-hunt is undertaken to furnish funds for the royal exchequer. This comes in neat sums for the soldiery, male and female, though they are fed and partly clothed, but receive no pay except at the scramble of "cowries" at the feasts, or "customs." Prisoners and "heads" are purchased of them; and it as well to be forthcoming with one of these articles, at the close of the year. At the "customs" the king will offer a present to a defaulter

or a coward; those who have acted well, step forward and accuse him, claiming the present for themselves; and if the charge is substantiated, an execution follows.

Executions are affairs of every day, and the first man in the kingdom is the *miegan*, or chief executioner; the second is called the *mayo*, or grand vizier. These ministers have each a "mother," as she is called; a lady who is, in fact, a female *mayo*, and a female *miegan*, whose duties are confined to the harem. To the *mayo* belongs authority over the soldiers masculine; the amazons are under the authority of the *miegan*.

We have said that the amazons are not supposed to marry, "and by their own statement," says Mr. Forbes, "they have changed their sex. 'We are men,' they say, 'not women.'" All dress alike, diet alike, and male and female emulate each other: what the men do the amazons endeavour to surpass. They take great care of their arms, polish the barrels, and, except when on duty, keep them in covers. There is no duty at the palace except when the king is in public, and then a guard of amazons protects the royal person, though on review he is guarded by the males, of whom a large detachment wait at the palace gates ready for service. The amazons are in barracks within the palace enclosure, and under the care of eunuchs and the *camoodee*, or treasurer. In every action there is some reference to the cutting off of heads. In their dances—and it is the duty of every soldier and amazon to be a proficient dancer—with eyes dilated, the right hand is working in a saw-like manner for some time, as if in the act of cutting round the neck; when both hands are used, a twist is supposed to finish the bloody deed.

There seems to be no doubt that the amazons well preserve their nun-like character; and a Dahomey campaign is by no means disgraced by that degree of freedom which might be inferred from the constituents of the army; while at home the women are accommodated within the harem's walls, and when abroad share the honours of royal wives. The bell announces to the traveller that he must not gaze on them; and they have few opportunities of conversation with the opposite sex. Their costume, however, is precisely the same as that of the man soldiers—a tunic, short drawers, and skull-cap—all in uniform. The general dress of the Dahomans is, a small cloth

round the loins, and a large cloth thrown over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm and breast bare, and reaching to the ankles. Hats are seldom worn; shoes never. The women wear a cloth reaching to the knee, fastened under their breasts, leaving them exposed. According to rank and wealth, anklets and armlets of all metals, and necklaces of glass, coral, and beads are worn by both sexes. Their instruments are not the most musical. First we have the *tam-tam*, which is formed of the trunk of a large tree, hollowed out and covered at each end with skin. It is ordinarily two yards in length and a yard in diameter. It is of a hideous colour, for it is painted with the blood of the enemy; and as for ornamentation, skulls are arranged about it in garlands. Then there are gongs, formed of two concave pieces of sheet-iron, joined together at their inner edges. Held in one hand by a handle, it is struck with a short iron rod. The gong is covered with network, at which depend certain little tags. They are teeth extracted from the jaws of enemies fallen in battle. The band is augmented by numerous standards of bells, like those which have been imported into our own English bands from China; trumpets in brass, copper, and ivory; and flutes and fifes of reed. There is very little concert in the amazonian band; the instrumentalists, of whom there are a hundred, select each their own tunes, or rather discord, have each their own notion of time, and are chiefly zealous to drown every other noise with their own.

"Dahoman houses, from the palace to the farm, are all similar. Walls, either of clay or palm branches, enclose, according to the number of inmates, courts and houses of all sizes, made of clay and thatched with grass. A bamboo bedstead or a few mats, some country pots and agricultural implements, and weapons, a loom of coarse material, besides the insignia of office (if a *cabooceer* or head man), are all the furniture. A store in each house is provided with clothes, grain, foreign goods, &c., according to the wealth of the owner. Within the enclosure are all domestic animals, and invariably a dog. The diet is simple, consisting chiefly of messes of meat and vegetable, mixed with palm oil and pepper, with which is eaten a corn cake called *kankee*, or *dab-a-dab*. There is very little variety. A mixture of beans, peppers, and palm oil is made into a cake, and sold to travellers; yams and cassada form the

staples of food. Foreign liquors are scarce and expensive; and as palm wine is forbidden by the king, the chief drinks are a very palatable malt called *pitto*, and a sort of burgoo called *ah-kah-sar*. Drunkenness is not allowed; nor is there, except in Whydah, much opportunity for it. As a public example, the king kept a drunkard and fed him on rum, and exhibited him at the 'customs,' that his emaciated and disgusting appearance might shame his people from making beasts of themselves; this terrible example is dead. In agricultural pursuits they are advanced in knowledge, but extremely indolent, keeping but a tithe of the land in cultivation. The religion of Dahomey is a mystery only known to the initiated. There is no daily worship, but periods at which the fetish men and women dance. They who are initiated have great power, and exact much in return. It is a proverb that the poor are never initiated. The fetish of Abomey is the leopard, that of Whydah the snake. The human sacrifices at the festival *See-que-ah-hee* are neither to the invincible god '*Seh*,' nor to the Fetish '*Voh-dong*' (leopard), but to the vitiated appetites of the soldiery. At the Cannah 'custom' there are sacrifices to the *Voh-dong*; and at the *See-que-ah-hee* there are sacrifices to the names of their ancestors; the Dahomans, like the disciples of Confucius, looking to their departed ancestors for blessings in this life, and in the world to come. There are private sacrifices all the year round. If a rich man dies, a boy and a girl are sacrificed to attend him in the next world."

We have previously spoken of certain "customs," which may be regarded either in the light of popular amusements or religious observances; in either point of view, they reflect little credit on the taste or morals of the nation. The clergy, or fetish-men, appear to act an important part on these and other occasions of a like character. These priests and their priestesses lead an easy, jovial, sensual life, eating largely, imbibing deeply, dancing enthusiastically, and occasionally bestowing, with dignified complacency, on the admiring laity their benedictions, for which they receive ample gratuities in return. In cases of sickness, the gods and their clerical attendants are propitiated by offerings of ducks, slaves, goats, or bullocks; and these constitute no inconsiderable portion of the ecclesiastical revenues. They receive, moreover, very

considerable accessions from the king on his prosperous return from the annual wars in which he indulges his subjects. At that period he sacrifices extensively, purchasing at a cheap rate the prisoners his soldiers have captured. With the proceeds of re-sale to America, and other Christian slave merchants, the "customs" are inaugurated and continued in a round of singing, gormandizing, dancing, decapitating, and debauchery.

The principal of these festivals takes place at the end of May, when the king complacently commits in public a series of deliberate murders, simply for the entertainment of the mob, who, together with a liberal allowance of mangled negro flesh, receive largesses of "cowries" (the currency), cloth, tobacco, and rum distributed to them by the monarch from a lofty stage, erected for the purpose. Mr. Forbes was present at one of these jubilees, and thus describes it:—

"We stood under an umbrella facing the mob; and now commenced in real earnest the scramble, the king labouring hard, throwing now cowries, now cloth, now tobacco. The naked multitude emitted" [&c. &c., like the atmosphere of a slave ship] "and as the mass oscillated, there arose a vapour like the miasma of a swamp. . . . Towards noon, a brigantine on wheels was drawn up outside the mob, and a boat on wheels put off to discharge her cargo of rum, tobacco, and cowries, which were added to the heaps on the platform. The king's party of soldiers, who kept together, were evidently the principal recipients, and we soon found that something like an equal distribution among them was aimed at. A captain of musketoon-men, named Poh-veh-soh, at once a military officer, court fool, and headsmen, caught my attention, and I threw him three pieces of cloth full of cowries; on receiving the third, he was ordered off the ground. Rum was distributed to the *élite* on the platform, and a breakfast provided for us, besides food, for the ministers and wives. By two o'clock one of the heaps of 1000 heads of cowries had been thrown away, and part of another given to the higher classes.* Some three or four hundred pieces of cloth, a few kegs of rum and rolls of tobacco having also disappeared, his majesty retired to rest awhile. Would I could here close the account of this

* A "head" of cowries is 2000; to which a nominal value of a dollar is attached.

day's proceedings, simply detailing the barbarous policy of raising the worst passions of man, in order to make people believe in the profuse distribution of a pay which, if doled out individually, would be a mere pittance. The crowd can have no idea of the sum scrambled for; all they are aware of is, that a continuous shower is kept up for seven hours, and they consider it must be immense. Even if a man gets none, he is content to know that he has been unfortunate; and, should he proclaim his ill luck, he would not be believed, each supposing the other to be disguising the real quantity he has gained.

"During the royal absence a dead silence reigned as if by general consent; when by accident it was broken, it was reinforced by the eunuchs sounding their metal bells, tolling the knell of eleven human beings. Out of fourteen now brought on the platform, we, the unworthy instruments of the Divine will, succeeded in saving the lives of three. Lashed as we have already described, these sturdy men met the gaze of their persecutors with a firmness perfectly astonishing. Not a sigh was breathed. In all my life I never saw such coolness so near death. It did not seem real, yet it soon proved frightfully so. One monster placed his finger to the eyes of a victim who hung down his head, but, finding no moisture, drew upon himself the ridicule of his fiendish coadjutors. Ten of the human offerings to the blood-thirsty mob, and an alligator and a cat, were guarded by soldiers, the other four by amazons. In the meantime, the king returned, and, calling us from our seats at the farther end of the platform, asked if we would wish to witness the sacrifice. With horror we declined, and begged to be allowed to save a portion of them. After some conversation with his courtiers, seeing him wavering, I offered him a hundred dollars each for the first and last of the ten; while, at the same time, my friend, Mr. Beecroft, made a similar offer for the first of the four, which was accepted, and the three were immediately unlashd from their precarious position, but forced to remain spectators of the horrid deed to be done on their less fortunate countrymen. The king insisted on our viewing the place of sacrifice. Immediately under the royal stand, within the brake of acacia bushes, stood seven or eight fell ruffians, some armed with clubs, others with scimitars, grim-

ning horribly. As we approached, the mob yelled fearfully, and called upon the king to 'feed them—they were hungry.' It was at a similar exhibition that Achardee (President of Jena), while looking into the pit with the king, was seized, thrown down, and murdered on the spot. Disgusted beyond the powers of description, we retired to our seats.

"As we regained our seats, a fearful yell rent the air. The victims were held high above the heads of their bearers, and the naked ruffians thus acknowledged the munificence of their prince. Silence again ruled, and the king made a speech, stating that of his prisoners he gave a portion to his soldiers, as his father and grandfather had done before. These were Attahpahms. Having called their names, the one nearest was divested of his clothes, the foot of the basket placed on the parapet, when the king gave the upper part an impetus, and the victim fell at once into the pit beneath. A fall of upwards of twelve feet might have stunned him, and before sense could return the head was cut off, and the body thrown to the mob, who, now armed with clubs and branches, brutally mutilated and dragged it to a distant pit, where it was left as food for the beast and birds of prey. After the third victim had thus been sacrificed, the king retired, and the chiefs and slave-dealers completed the deed which the monarch blushed to finish. There was not even the poor excuse that these men had committed a crime, or even borne arms against the Dahomans."

In 1849, thirty two victims were sacrificed at the "customs;" in 1848, two hundred and forty.

The rulers who thus practise cruelty for the amusement of their subjects are such as naturally indulge in blood for their own delight. The *miegan*, first dignity and chief executioner, is a paragon of ferocity. He not unfrequently executes prisoners with his own hands, and evidently to his great delight, says Lieutenant Bouet. At these executions, especially those which take place at night, unspeakable horrors are enacted. Fetish men, preceded by drums and bells, march round and round the palace shortly before the hour of sunset. At this well-known signal the people fly into their houses, for it is death to be seen in the streets. Then, when darkness has fallen, shrieks and groans are heard rending the night. These are the cries of the wretched victims who are led round the

palace by torchlight, and subjected to torture, as a prelude to death. Shortly before daylight their cries cease, one by one; at sunrise all is over; and new heads are set up to garnish the walls and other public places. The dead atmosphere is lifted from the city; the inhabitants creep fearfully into the streets, and led by curiosity, and by love of blood too, perhaps, go to contemplate the newly-decorated walls of the palace.

Lieutenant Bouet had the honour of an interview with the *miegan*, at his own house. He says—"I could scarcely refrain from laughing at the terror exhibited by my palankeen-bearers, and of all who accompanied me, on crossing the dread threshold. This, however, was easily explained; for the *mayo* never enters that house himself, unless obliged to do so; for the old rascal, who has probably some peccadilloes on his conscience, is never certain of leaving it alive. The residence of the *miegan* is very vast, containing many secret chambers and subterranean cells, from which groans are heard and sudden cries of distress. On leaving the house, my palankeen-bearers moved with an agility that I never noticed on any previous occasion."

But Gueza, the king, is the arch tyrant and murderer. "In the royal presence no rank is free from prostration and the throwing dirt on the head, except white men, and a certain class of necromancers, who regulate sacrifices to divert epidemics, and other evils: these people wear hats, and only bow to the throne. The liberated Africans and returned slaves are considered as white men; and while the king's ministers are prostrate in the dust they merely bow. In the royal presence none may smoke but white men; and in the precincts of the palace, or the grand fetish houses, none but whites may remain covered, and none may be carried or ride, or be shaded by an umbrella, unless by the king's permission. If the king's stick be shown, all bow down and kiss the dust except the bearer, who is exempt. In entering a town or house the head man presents the stranger with pure water, which he first drinks himself; and this is equivalent to a promise of safety. It is customary each morning to exchange compliments with sticks or seals, or other articles of *virtu*, which may be known as the individual's representative; and each stick-bearer receives a glass of rum! The

royal wives and their slaves are considered too sacred for man to gaze upon; and on meeting any of these sable beauties on the road, a bell warns the wayfarer to turn off, or stand against a wall while they pass. The king has thousands of wives, the nobles hundreds, others tens; while the soldier is unable to support one."

The laws are very strict, theft and even cowardice being punished with death. "Taxes are heavy to all parties, and farmed to collectors. The holders of the 'customs' have collectors stationed at all markets, who receive 'cowries' in number according to the value of the goods carried for sale. Besides these, there are collectors on public roads leading from one district to another, and on the lagoon on each side of Whydah, the single port; in short, everything is taxed, and the tax goes to the king. If a cock crows in the highway, it is forfeited to the tax-gatherer, and consequently, on the whole distance from Abomey, the capital, to Whydah, the cocks are muzzled. On the lagoon and public roads, there are toll-gates, at which a custom duty is demanded. These, with the annual presents at the 'customs,' the tithe on palm-oil of one gallon out of eighteen, and the duties on foreign trade, form the legal revenue of his Dahoman majesty. The every-day life of a Dahoman it would be a difficult matter to describe, depending as it does on the whim of the sovereign. Should a man inherit industrious habits, he must be very cautious in developing them, lest he fall under the suspicion of the government. If he brings more soil under cultivation, or in any manner advances his family to riches, without the license of the king, he not only endangers his fortune, but his own life and the lives of his family; instead of becoming a man of property and head of a family, he is condemned to slavery; and, serving his majesty or his ministers, assists unwillingly to uphold the laws that have ruined him, his only alternative being death."

A pretty picture this of manners and customs! The Dahoman cities appear to be equally disgusting. Drawing again on Forbes's narrative, we read—

"No visitor can enter the capital, Abomey, without a sensation of disappointment in the want of grandeur, and disgust at the ghastly ornaments of its gateway. The city is about eight miles

in circumference, surrounded by a ditch, about five feet deep, filled with the prickly acacia, its only defence. It is entered by six gates, which are simply clay walls crossing the road, with two apertures, one reserved for the king, the other a thoroughfare for his subjects. In each aperture are two human skulls; and on the inside a pile of skulls, human, and of all the beasts of the field, even to the elephant's. Besides these six gates, the ditch, which is of an oval form, branches off, at each side the north-west gate, to the north and north-west, and over each branch is a similar gateway, for only one purpose, to mislead an enemy in a night attack. In the centre of the city are the palaces of Dange-lah-cordeh and Agrim-gomeh, adjoining; on the north stands the original palace of Dahomey; about these, and to the south gate, are houses, the most conspicuous of which are those of the ministers. In front of Agrim-gomeh is an extensive square, in which are the barracks and a high shed or palaver-house, a saluting battery of fifteen guns, and a stagnant pond. Just inside the south-east gate (the Cannah) are a saluting battery and pond, and numerous blacksmiths' shops. The roads or streets are in good order; and, though there are not any shops, the want of them is supplied by two large markets—*Aha-ja-hee*, to the eastward of the central palace, at once a market parade, and sacrificial ground; and *Hung-jooloh*, just outside the south gate. Besides these, there are several smaller markets, the stalls of which are all owned, and are generally attended by women, the wives of all classes and orders, from the *miegan's* to the blacksmith's. The fetish houses are numerous, and ridiculously ornamented. Cloths are manufac-

tured within the palaces and houses. There are no regular streets, and it is difficult for a European to imagine himself in the capital of a large country, as all the houses are surrounded by high red clay walls, which enclose large forest-trees, besides orange, banana, and other fruit-trees. All the houses are low and thatched, and one only, in the palace of Dange-lah-cordeh, and one in that of Gumasse, can boast of two storeys.

"The Dahoman capital is, in fact, entirely unprotected by its walls and gates, and built in the most ill-judged of positions for so large a city. For a distance of five miles on every side there is no water. Passing out of the north gate, the traveller soon arrives at a most beautiful point of view. Standing on an eminence of some hundred feet, a fertile valley lies stretched at his feet, bounded on the extreme north-west by the lofty summits of the Dab-a-dab hills, tinged with blue, and looming larger from the distant view. Here and there about this fertile plain are small oozy reservoirs of water, from which the sole supply of that necessary element is obtained for the populous city. With so scanty and precarious a supply, it may well be supposed that fresh water is a luxury in Abomey, and the cry of *Seedagbee* (good water) as constant as the *Agua de Lisboa* of the Gallegos in Portugal. On the north-eastern side of the capital, the farms are dependent solely on the rain-water collected during the rainy season, and secured in deep pits smeared on the inside with palm-oil, whence it is drawn off into earthen vessels, and thus stored up within the houses until the return of the rainy period."

Dahomey, adieu!

HUMAN COMBUSTION.

A REVELATION BY A PHYSICIAN.

THERE is something naturally repellent to a well-constituted mind in having to lay bare those aspects of human depravity and degradation that too often stain the annals of existence with some of its harshest features; but the moralist, like the surgeon, must often be cruel that he may be kind, and, while probing the fester of disease, outrage his own feelings in the hope of restoring affliction to a pristine health and vigour.

The laws that govern the animal creation have by the Almighty been made so definite and irrevocable, that any dereliction from their fundamental principles must invariably be attended by results as sure as they are terrible. If the daily evidence of evils resulting from ignorance or neglect of the mechanical laws is appreciable to every intelligence, is it not wonderful that mankind should either despise or treat with apathy that higher and holier range of canons established by the hand of the Omnipotent himself for the guidance and well-being of his masterpiece of physical mechanism, man?—a structure so sublime and perfect, that there is no invention of human contrivance but has been deduced from, or had its archetype in, man himself, from the rudimentary lever to the invention of the voltaic pile. But I am digressing, and forget that I have only to deal with life—hard-faced, practical existence—the working powers as seen in the consummated man; in fine, the great effect of cause.

The case I am about to record came under my observation very early in life, and I then merely witnessed the effect of what I am about to describe; but knowing the unfortunate victim well, the frightful spectacle it was my province to witness, aided by the ductile state of my mind at that time, so concurred to fix the scene and catastrophe indelibly on my memory, that after all these years, and familiarity with professional cases of all kinds, I cannot now recur to the subject without an instinctive shudder at what I well remember at that time filled me with intense awe and amazement.

John Allington began life, like thousands of his fellow-men, with little aid from civil education, but blessed by nature with rude health, and a large stock of

physical strength and animal exuberance. By the industry of his hands he could maintain himself in independent comfort. This knowledge, however, instead of making him persevering and provident, tended only to render him indifferent and prodigal. He knew, whenever he chose to labour, that he could earn enough by his trade in three days to support him for seven; and he too frequently preferred to idle or dissipate the remainder of his time, rather than by a steady persistency accumulate his earnings, and enhance his future prospects. There was always, he thought, time enough to be prudent when circumstances called for the sacrifice; and thus, though not actually a sot or a drunkard, or by any means of a bad disposition, he was every day, by his false reasoning and procrastinating habits, laying the foundation of every evil propensity.

At the age of thirty, John Allington married as industrious and deserving a young woman as any to be met with for miles around the village in which they resided. Their house was a pattern of neatness and comfort; their children, in good looks and tidiness, the admired of all the neighbourhood; and the father himself, for several years an assiduous and most exemplary parent and husband, having, to all appearance, entirely shaken off his indolent habits, and applied himself industriously to the maintenance of his family, either stimulated thereto by the silent example of his wife, or the growing demands made on his resources by his increasing family, and aided probably by the ennobling consciousness of doing his duty in concert with his steady-going and thrifty partner. Thus, though John Allington might never have been able to place himself above *the necessity of work*, there was every likelihood that, if he continued as he then did, he would never be reduced to *the necessity of want*. But unfortunately all these cheering prospects were at once blighted by the very means that, in ordinary cases, seem to insure them—the accession of fortune. A distant relative of his wife dying some years after their marriage, left Mrs. Allington the sum of fifty pounds a year, to be paid in weekly instalments by a

respectable tradesman in the village, who acted as executor and trustee. Here was at once a living, John thought, without toil or trouble; and all his old and discarded propensities to idleness and ease returned upon him with the fatality of a disease. "Why should I work now," he thought, "when there's enough to keep us without? Besides, the girls are all in service, and Tom and Jack out 'prentices, and there's only the old woman and me to keep; so why should I slave any longer? It's sheer nonsense to work for work's sake; and it's time, now the young ones are out of the way, I should have a little enjoyment." Accordingly, in opposition to all his wife's prudential reasoning and advice, the implements of trade were cast aside, and John Allington became an idle village loungeur. The steps are easy, when inclination paves the way, to vice and dissipation; and John felt it was more comfortable to talk by the warm fire of the public-house than in the road or village, and the society he met there every way more congenial than that of his now irritable and censoring helpmate, over her weak tea and neighbours' gossip.

In his earlier days John Allington had been content in his idle fits to drink plain beer; but now such poor potations were deemed beneath the respectability of an independent man with a POUND a week, and he consequently drank nothing but rum, and, for convenience, carried a small bottle invariably with him, to supply the craving appetite that had already become a want between the few hours of night and morning, or the occasional lapses in his visits to the tavern. Idleness, and the facility of means, having afforded him the opportunity of indulgence, he became at once a confirmed drunkard. There were no intermediate steps or degrees; no gradual sequence from irregularity to confirmed intemperance; but he passed without any evident gradation into the settled debauchee. His long sobriety, and the means so unexpectedly placed at his disposal, instead of deterring, rather favoured and encouraged the quick transition. Unfortunately, too, John's wife, though of a notable and thrifty disposition while fulfilling her domestic duties in concert with her husband, did not possess either the temper or wisdom to meet this new state of things with that conduct that might either subdue or mitigate the evil that threatened so seriously to assail them.

In herself, I have said, she was industrious, frugal, and cleanly; but in each particular she was rather stimulated by a sense of external pride, and performed the functions of a commendable housewife less from the innate love of her duties and the commendation of an approving conscience, than from the gratification of hearing her orderly household and domestic habits applauded by her more indolent and less persevering neighbours. Like many of her uneducated sex, she knew of no other means of reclaiming faults in men or children than by correction or abuse; and as she could not, in the case of her husband, resort to the former, she satisfied her conscience in part by inflicting on him that incessant chastisement of the tongue which did more to harden than reclaim, and soon became an inveterate scold—a course that only indurated her partner on his offence, and drove him at length entirely from her society, if the few hours of sottish imbecility between midnight and morning, when the public-house was closed, and he snored out the drunken watch of night, may be allowed as an exception.

Mrs. Allington was not a woman to bear patiently the total ruin of her home and peace, or see day by day their means consumed, the neat and homely furniture sold piecemeal to pay her husband's fast accumulating debts, and not complain, or sit down quietly to a cheerless fire and an empty room; for, in less than two years from the ill-starred legacy, not one vestige of their former comfort was left to cheer them. She had hitherto striven by her own labour to counteract, in some degree, the headlong ruin entailed on her by her husband, and procure for herself some small share of daily necessities; for the weekly stipend was already found insufficient to keep the drunkard supplied with his potations. There is no passion that takes so firm a hold of the mind of the vulgar and the ignorant as the satisfaction of revenge, and, however deadly its consequences may be to themselves or others, when once possessed with this demon, they will follow its dictates with the most malicious satisfaction. Mrs. Allington had hitherto tried abuse, anger, and every irritating means within the scope of her tongue and mind to reclaim her husband, but only to make the bad still worse. She was now resolved to be *revenged*, and meet her dissolute partner on his own terms. If he was insensible

to all the misery of their now squalid home, and could sleep as soundly on the straw mattress and the hard boards, why should *she* have to endure the hourly misery of hunger, cold, and privation—biting calamities to which she was insensible? “Why,” she argued, in communing with her own gloomy heart, “why should I bear it all, and know no forgetfulness?” She was only conscious of the present suffering, the wretchedness that benumbed the latest virtue of her mind, and froze the last trace of enduring womanhood yet lingering round her heart. To suffer pinching miseries alone, while *he* who should have shared her weal and woe rioted in uncurbed license; who ate, and drank, and was warmed by genial fires, to which her hearth was a stranger; who spent his days in apathy, and was insensible to all the blighting agencies that made her life a living sufferance, was more than her roused nature could endure. “And all for what, or who?” she cried, in the bitterness of her passion. For one who, dead to every sense of shame, requited her long endurance with drunken violence, and who, like the gorged wolf, nightly made the connubial couch a human lair to sleep off the plethoric drench of his intemperate orgies.

If cause could justify a dereliction from the path of honour and virtue, where is the wife or woman who could not claim a host of precedents? But the code of female ethics, and the innate virtue of the sex, place them happily on a loftier basis and a nobler sphere of action than the base casuistry that legislates for man, or man legislates for himself. Mrs. Allington, however, was an ignorant woman, and, as I have said before, less innately worthy than outwardly commendable. To such a mind provocation was considered an ennobling motive for a just retaliation; and having once resolved to be revenged, she lost not an hour in putting in practice her system.

That night the wife was as insensible to pinching hunger, or the biting blast, before which, that morning, she had shrunk and shivered, as the swinish husband at whose side she lay in lethargic oblivion. Cunning had lent its aid to her resolve; and watching her opportunity, she robbed her husband as he slept to buy that Lethæan draught whose poison quells hunger, cold, and memory itself. Success begot indifference, and at length she boldly took, and claimed

as a right, what first she gained by theft. We will not dwell further on so degrading a theme as female depravity, but at once proceed to the moral of this life's true story.

It was nearly midnight, towards the end of January, in that memorable winter of long-continued snow, 1823, that John Allington sat in a broken arm-chair near the extinguished fire, one elbow leaning on an old rickety table, on which stood a pint bottle filled with rum; in the other hand, which hung languidly by his side, he held an empty wine-glass. His head was bent forward, and his matted hair hung like a ragged thatch over his wrinkled brows. His eyes, as he occasionally opened them with a vacant stare, and with his sallow countenance, as revealed by the light of flickering candle close to his features, seemed flat, blood-shot, and lustreless; while from his thin mouth and shiny lips part of the unswallowed spirit oozed down his chin, presenting a sickening picture of moral ruin and hopeless depravity. Some distance apart, on the opposite side of the wide chimney, seated on a low stool, the only other article of furniture in the wretched hovel, with her bare arms and bony hands tucked for warmth under a ragged shawl that hardly covered her yellow neck, sat the once neat and comely Mrs. Allington, with her bleary eyes directed in dreamy apathy on her regardless husband.

Thrown on the hearth, and covering up the dead white embers, lay a bundle of firewood, the thick frost and patches of loose ice that coated the fuel, with the flakes of snow that found their way down the wide-throated chimney, giving, with the obscure glimmer of the candle, an aspect of indescribable wretchedness and misery to the desolate hut that, beyond the two silent inmates and a truckle bed of rags and straw, contained no vestige of comfort, no emblem of home.

For some minutes the drunkard's eyes had ceased to open; the head rolled slowly to the shoulder, bringing the face and lips within an inch of the flickering candle; while a low inspiration, like a faint sigh, accompanied the motion, and all again was still. Was it fancy, or the deception of the light, or the vague imaginings that the dreamy eye often pictures on the intelligence, that produced the blue halo round the lips? Presently the light extended, circling round the mouth, lighting up the palate like a cave of fire,

and making the white teeth stand out with distinct and ghastly horror. Preserving the same unmoved and listless attitude, the wife gazed sleepily on her husband, as on some fancy image of the mind, whose unreal nature needed but the exertion of the will to dissipate; and with that dreamy consciousness that apprehends deception from realities, she closed her eyes, and leaning her head on her knees, indulged her apathetic musing, while the lambent flame crept stealthily over the man's features, irradiating every fibre of the face, and encompassing the head with phosphoric terror.

From mouth, nostrils, eyes, and ears, the blue, unearthly flame crept out, spreading its horrid conflagration down neck and shoulders, arms and body, showing, as through a transparent screen, the inward organs and all the hidden mystery of life lit up and burning; while over all a dense white smoke circled round the hideous spectacle like a misty winding-sheet, filling the drear chamber with a choking and infectious odour, that drove the inhaler of the deadly stench almost distracted with its repulsive poison.

Half an hour had passed before the fetor from the incinerating body descended so low as to affect the vital functions of the bent and dreamy wife, as, huddled upon her low seat, she sat like a brooding incubus, half comatose, half watchful.

Roused at length by the pestiferous air that made each breath a choking gasp, the lethargic woman opened her eyes, and gazed in such intense and mortal agony upon the hideous spectacle that, wrapped in flame, riveted her vision, that every hair of her unkempt locks started up like living reeds, and her contracting flesh crept into knots with fear. Of all the frightful sights that from the birth of man have scared humanity, never was witnessed one more terrible and ghastly than the appalling thing that now confronted her. From head to foot the noiseless fire preyed on the human bulk, that like a vast glowworm sat erect, the dark wood of the unscorched chair throwing out each circling rib and jutting bone in all the vigour of intense relief. Pressing her hands for a moment before her eyes, as if in disbelief of what encountered them, she rose, and with a suffocating

cry sprang forward to the chair, and rudely placed her hand upon the burning mass, as if to rouse the slumberer from his awful state; but with a piercing shriek, every feature convulsed with terror, she staggered back, appalled, before the cloud of dust that fell like snow flakes from the shaken carcase, that with the touch collapsed and dropped in smouldering atoms at her feet, strewing the damp bricks with its human ruins. Wild with terror, the distracted wife poured forth shriek on shriek of wild alarm, till some of the nearest neighbours, roused from their sleep by her piercing cries, rushed, half dressed, to the cottage, and bursting in the door, entered the fearful chamber, to recoil again as fast from the pestiferous air and the haggard countenance of the still shrieking wife, who, with her hands stained by the unctuous fire, pointed to the embers that in ghastly fragments strewed the floor. A few blackened remains, that science with difficulty discovered to be bones, were placed in a coffin, and, after a legal inquiry, committed to the earth as the remains of John Allington. But many months elapsed before the horrified widow recovered from the shock of that awful catastrophe, or her mind could blunt the terrible vividness of that fearful picture. The ominous warning, however, given by the fatal, and, as she conceived, supernatural fate of her husband, produced an instant and salutary benefit, not only to the widow herself, but on every intemperate peasant for miles round the hamlet where the event occurred; and for years after, the mere mention of John Allington's fate was sufficient to sober the most reckless, and put a restraining check on his potations. The moral and religious improvement, in the case of the widow, was as complete and lasting as the interposition had been awful and signal; and rendered almost affluent by her weekly stipend, and once more surrounded by the comforts of a neatly-furnished home, she lived for many years a life of chastened sorrow and devout piety, and, while performing acts of charity to others, winning the esteem of her friends and the approval of her own conscience; and though time overcame much of the terror of her husband's death, she never forgot the awful lesson inculcated by that event.

THE FAIR FANARIOTE.

IN consequence of the numerous revolutions that have accompanied the fall of the Greek empire in Byzantium, most of the inhabitants of Fanari, near Constantinople, boast of being descendants of the dethroned imperial family—a circumstance which is probable enough, and which nobody takes the trouble to dispute, any more than the alleged nobility of the Castilian peasantry, or the absurd genealogies of certain great families.

In a retired street in Pera, one of the suburbs of Constantinople, a descendant of the Cantacuzenes followed the humble calling of a butcher; but, in spite of industry and activity, he had great difficulty in earning a sufficiency to pay his way, and maintain his wife and his only daughter Sophia. The latter had just entered her fourteenth year, and her growing beauty was the admiration of the whole neighbourhood. Fate, or, if you wish to call it, Providence, ordained that the poor butcher should suffer repeated losses, which reduced him to a condition bordering on beggary. His wife unfolded his distressed circumstances to a Greek, one of her relations, who was a dragoman to the French embassy, and who, in his turn, related the story to the Marquis de Vauban, the ambassador. This nobleman became interested for the unfortunate family, and especially for Sophia, whom the officious dragoman described as being likely to fall into the snares that were laid for her, and to become an inmate of the harem of some pasha, or even of a Turk of inferior rank. Prompted by pity, curiosity, or perhaps by some other motive, the ambassador paid a visit to the distressed family. He saw Sophia, was charmed by her beauty and intelligence, and he proposed that her parents should place her under his care and allow him to convey her to France. The misery to which the poor people were reduced may perhaps palliate the shame of acceding to this extraordinary proposition; but, be this as it may, they consented to surrender up their daughter for the sum of 1500 piastres, and Sophia was that same day conducted to the ambassador's palace.

She found in the Marquis de Vauban a kind and liberal benefactor. He engaged masters to instruct her in every

branch of education; and elegant accomplishments, added to her natural charms, rendered her an object of irresistible attraction.

In the course of a few months, the ambassador was called home, and he set out, accompanied by this Oriental treasure, to travel to France by land. To diminish, as far as possible, the fatigue of a long journey, they proceeded by short stages, and having passed through European Turkey, they arrived at Kamienetz, in Podolia, which is the first fortress belonging to Russia. Here the marquis determined to rest for a short time, before undertaking the remainder of his tedious journey.

Count de Witt, a descendant of the grand pensionary of Holland, who was governor of the place, received his noble visitor with every mark of attention. The count, however, no sooner beheld Maria, than he became deeply enamoured of her; and on learning the equivocal situation in which she stood—being neither a slave nor a companion, but, as it were, a piece of merchandise purchased for 1500 piastres—he wound up his declaration of love by an offer of marriage. The count was a handsome man, scarcely thirty years of age, a lieutenant-general in the Russian service, and enjoying the high favour of his sovereign, Catherine II. The fair Greek, as may well be imagined, did not reject this favour of fortune, but accepted the offer of her suitor without hesitation.

It was easy to foresee that the Marquis de Vauban would not be very willing to part with a prize which he regarded as lawfully acquired, and to which he attached no small value. The count, therefore, found it advisable to resort to stratagem. Accordingly, his excellency having one day taken a ride beyond the ramparts, the drawbridges were raised, and the lovers repaired to church, where their hands were joined by a papa. When the marquis appeared at the gates of the fortress, and demanded admittance, a messenger was sent out to inform him of what had happened; and to complete the *dénouement* of the comedy, the marriage contract was exhibited to him in due form.

To save Sophia from the reproaches which her precipitancy—it may perhaps

he said her ingratitude—would have fully justified, the count directed the ambassador's suite to pack up their baggage, and join his excellency *extra muros*. The poor marquis soon discovered that it was quite useless to stay where he was for the purpose of venting threats and complaints; and he had no hope that the court of France would think it worth while to go to war for the sake of avenging his affront. He therefore took a hint from one of the French poets, who says—

“Le bruit est pour le fat, la plainte pour le sot,
L'honnête homme trompe, s'éloigne, et ne dit mot,”

and he set off, doubtless with the secret determination never again to traffic in merchandise which possesses no value when it can be either bought or sold. About two years after this marriage the Count de Witt obtained leave of absence, and, accompanied by his wife, he visited the different courts of Europe. Sophia's beauty, which derived piquancy from a certain oriental languishment of manner, was everywhere the theme of admiration. The Prince de Ligne, who saw her at the court of France, mentions her in his memoir in terms of eulogy, which I cannot think exaggerated; for when I knew her at Tulczyn, though she was then upwards of forty, her charms retained all their lustre, and she outshone the young beauties of the court, amidst whom she appeared like Calypso surrounded by her nymphs.

I now arrive at the second period of Sophia's life, which forms a sequel perfectly in unison with the commencement. Count Felix Patoeka, at the commencement of the troubles in Poland, raised a

considerable party by the influence of his rank and vast fortune. During a temporary absence from the court of Poland, he made a tour through Italy, and on his return, he met the Count and Countess de Witt at Hamburg, where he fell deeply in love with Sophia. Not to weary with the details of the romance, I will come to the *dénoûment* at once.

Nothing is so easy as to obtain a divorce in Poland. The law extends so far on this point, that I know a gentleman, Mr. Wortel, who had no less than four wives, all living, and bearing his name. Count Patoeka, therefore, availing himself of this advantage, and having previously made every arrangement necessary, one morning called on Count de Witt, and without further ceremony, said—“Count, I love your wife, and cannot live without her. I know that I am not indifferent to her; and I might immediately carry her off; but I wish to owe my happiness to you, and retain for ever a grateful sense of your generosity. Here are two papers, one is an act of divorce, which only wants your signature, for you see the countess has already affixed hers to it; the other is a bond for two millions of florins, payable at my bankers in the city. We may, therefore, settle the business amicably or otherwise, just as you please.” The husband doubtless thought of his adventure at the fortress of Kaminietz, and like the French ambassador, he resigned himself to his fate, and signed the paper. The fair Sophia became, the same day, the Countess Patoeka; and to the charms of beauty and talents were now added the attractions of a fortune, the extent of which was unequalled in Europe.

IRELAND AND THE INFORMERS OF 1798.

THE Irish character is full of anomalies. It is at once faithful and false, deceptive and true—its loves or its hatreds have no medium, and however good its natural instincts may be, it is so easily warped by passion, or changed by association, as to render those instincts but too often unavailing for good. Unlike the Saxon, impulse with it means action, and argument conclusion. It strikes but hears not; its first impressions are, in its own eyes, solid foundations, and almost as a matter of course the superstructure erected on them have neither elevation nor strength; its perceptions are muddled by its passions, and its reason clouded by feelings, which, like the shiftings of the kaleidoscope, take the most fantastic shapes in the most unexpected way. Full of ardent affection, it will share its last crust with a friend, and “go to death’s door and beyond it” to serve or succour him; and yet we only adopt a well-used proverb of their own when we say, “that if you put an Irishman on the spit, you will find a dozen others ready to turn and baste him,” thus saddling themselves with an amount of turpitude which must be, to say the least of it, an exaggeration of the truth. But its history shows us that it is only an exaggeration after all. An Irishman rather feels than reflects, and the “neighbour” who refuses to adopt his views of men and things, however extreme they may be, is no “neighbour” for him; his perceptions are limited, and his reflections seldom travel beyond the circle they embrace—the man that adopts them is his friend; the man who hesitates is at first looked on with doubt, and is soon converted to a foe. It is this that makes Irish history a romance, Irish politics an unsatisfactory problem, and Irish party quarrels a Corsican *vendetta*, and Irish sayings and doings very often incomprehensible. From the contradictory and impulsive spirit, it happens that there is in reality in Ireland nothing like “national spirit,” at least nothing like what in England we dignify by that lofty and invigorating title, and which has converted a mere speck on the ocean into an empire coequal with those of Greece or of Rome in their greatest and palmyest day. Irish orators tell their audience that “union is strength,” and are content with the cap-

tivating sound of the phrase; while Englishmen of all grades convert the phrase into a reality, and profit by the combined action which the feeling insures. In Ireland it means a rhetorical nullity—in England it is an omnipresent fact. Irish declaimers insist on “Ireland for the Irish,” and begin at the wrong end to make it so; English citizens are content with things as they are, and by doing their best to better them, make sure of the result. They are willing to divide with Ireland all the advantages which by their own exertions they have gained for themselves, and they deprecate the atrocities of former ages which have left a legacy of ill-feeling behind, which is now remembered to the injury of all; they think not of conquest but amalgamation, not of spoliation but of reciprocity; it is not in their power to give to Ireland all she desires or asks for, but they would willingly go further than they have done in that way, were it not that in the redress of “grievances” Irishmen themselves are the main obstacles to the result. It is not, for instance, the Government of England but the landlords of Ireland who refuse “tenant right;” and although in all probability there are not two men in the Cabinet who would object to a wholesome modification of the Irish Church Establishment, still fettered and bound as they are by party ties and wide-spread influences and associations, they dare not give way until the pressure from without becomes irresistible. Both these measures are too obviously necessary, and would be as obviously useful to the peace and prosperity of Ireland and to the benefit of the empire in general, to be refused eventually in one shape or other; but then comes the dead-lock—on the one hand landlordism insists that “the rights of property should be respected,” meaning thereby that they should be allowed to retain the powers they have, although the experience of both the past and present prove that so far from these powers and privileges promoting any useful object, their failure to do so has been disastrously notorious; while on the other hand those who have clamoured most violently for “tenant right” have given a lever to their opponents by requiring a great deal more than any prudent government could afford to give—

at least until a less exacting code had been tried and failed. Again, it has become long since notorious that the Irish branch of the Established Church is rather a hindrance than a help to Protestantism, simply because its original mission has utterly failed, and because in Ireland its ascendancy kept up the evil feeling of bygone days, and is pointed at in triumph by those who seek to perpetuate and foster it, thereby marshalling and envenoming class against class and creed against creed; but who will say that we Englishmen are at fault for permitting its continuance as it is, when we feel that Irish Protestants themselves ought to be the first to perceive the cumbrous nature of its tenure, and the utter extravagance of its demands for perpetuity, as contrasted with its duties or its utility? It is Irish Protestantism that is blameworthy for sustaining it in its present inefficient and overgrown state, and thereby embittering the feelings against it of those who regard it as a trophy of bygone conquest and not as a medium for the diffusion of religious truth. No sane man who looks at things as they are, and as in justice they ought to be, but must acknowledge the reasonableness of the complaint, and no honest or conscientious one, who wishes to leave no foundation for it, but must desire that the good sense of Irishmen would consent to reductions or modifications which would place religion on its true basis, as depending not on Mammon but on God. And, then again, as to the question of "national education," surely no one can say that the English Government is altogether to be blamed for the partial failure which has been the result. Had Irishmen of different creeds worked harmoniously together from the first, there could have been no difficulty in proportioning the relative claims of each, and of so suiting circumstances as to meet the exigencies of the case. But unfortunately this has never been done. The whole aspect of the matter bore a belligerent one from the commencement, and from the determined characters of the combatants, and the resolution on either side to have "no surrender" as their motto, no one need be astonished at the failure of a scheme which looked so well and seemed to promise so much, although the end has been that so far from promoting unanimity it has insured discord, and instead of uniting creeds or classes, never was there a greater disintegration than there is now. Of course the govern-

ment, worn out in the conflict as it is, will eventually yield, although by so doing it is very problematical if any party will be pleased with any new arrangement it may make. No doubt there are glimmerings of hope in prospect, should the proceedings of the Irish members who have been chosen to sit in the new Parliament be at all equal to the difficult duties they will be called upon to perform. "Irish parties" have been before organised and paraded in the House, and have been found to hang very loosely together indeed, but we think that in the characters and antecedents of the men who are likely to take a prominent part in the new projection, there is a fair amount of patriotic, independent, and unselfish material coupled with ready talent and ripe experience, which on the one hand will not allow their possessors to be decoyed away by that species of temptation which under such circumstances amounts to something like corruption, and on the other which will lead them to be guided by a wise expediency—a wholesome sort of give-and-take feeling—which by accepting the constitutional theory of "instalments" as a prudent and reasonable one, will in the end achieve more real good for their country and constituents, and bring higher and purer fame to themselves, than if they had adopted a more wholesale and headlong course. But in the adoption of such prudent resolves the Irish people must have a voice, and impulsive and suspicious as they are, the thing to be dreaded is that their representatives may not be given fair play, and that "stump oratory" may endeavour at home to gain political capital for itself by underrating their efforts and undervaluing their views. There is no country better provided with patriotic declaimers on a small scale than Ireland; "they grow on every bush and swim in every stream," as Burke once said, and it will require a great deal of good management on the part of those who have accepted a very onerous mission to neutralize their mischievous efforts and insure for themselves a "fair field and no favour," which is all they can require.

There has lately issued from the press a work under the title which heads our article, and which is amusing and instructive in the highest degree. Were it not written by a man whose ability and character are pledges for his veracity, we should rank it with Harrison Ainsworth's efforts, and designate it as an almost im-

possible romance. It has, as we think, appeared at a very opportune and timely juncture, and, in our opinion, Mr. Fitzpatrick is entitled to great praise, not alone for the talent, industry, and research evidenced in his volume, but for the public spirit which has induced him to place before his countrymen the appalling pictures and consequences which have always resulted from fanatical and misguided attempts to "revolutionize" Ireland, or to upset those constitutional relations between her and England on the proper regulation of which the welfare of both must so materially depend. At this moment, particularly, is such a warning more than ever needful, and voracious indeed must be the credulity of even the most ignorant Irishman, if, on reading over the records of crime and treachery now submitted to him, he do not shrink at the idea of encountering obloquy and danger in their most formidable forms, aggravated, too, by the feeling that he must necessarily become both the dupe and the victim of such unscrupulous villains as Higgins, McNally, Reynolds, Armstrong, and Magan, whose instincts are those of the tiger and the wolverine combined.

Francis Higgins, the hero of Mr. Fitzpatrick's remarkable biographical sketch, and familiarly known by the title of "The Sham Squire," was born nobody exactly knows where, and reared nobody knows how. He commenced his career, however, in stirring times, and when great events were in their parturition, during which the history of Ireland presents a series of panoramic images—a mixture of light and shadow—instances of devoted fidelity and abounding rascality—groupings of mistaken enthusiasm, selfish venality, and the most abhorrent domestic treason—such as we in vain look for in the annals of any other country or any other age. It is supposed that Higgins was born in a Dublin cellar, and while yet of tender years became successively "errand-boy, shoeblick, and waiter in a public-house"—improving trades for one of so ripe a spirit, but which he soon left, directed by a vaulting ambition, in order to become a writing-clerk in an attorney's office. While in this position, he commenced practice on his own account, by rejecting popery as unfashionable and impolitic, and by forging a series of legal documents purporting to show to all "inquiring friends" that he was a man of property and a government official.

He had an object in this, as he was by this time to appear in a new character, as the lover of Miss Mary Anne Archer, who possessed a tolerable fortune and a foolish old father. Miss Archer happened to be a Roman Catholic, and was strong in her faith; but this was only a trifle to Higgins, who again forsook the new creed for the old, and proved thereby, like Richard, "a thriving wooer." They were married, and the Archer *père* did at last what he ought to have done at first, ferreted out the real antecedents of his precious son-in-law, and discovered that he had a very clever fellow to deal with; while his daughter, finding, after a short cohabitation, that her husband was "by no means a desirable one," fled back to her bamboozled parent, who straightway indicted the pretender. Higgins was found guilty and imprisoned for a year, and it was during Judge Robinson's charge to the jury that he fastened the name of "The Sham Squire" on the prisoner, a *soubriquet* which stuck to him persistently during the remainder of his life, and proved a greater infliction to his vanity than an apparently heavier penalty would have been. This was in 1767. "Poor Mary Anne" died of a broken heart, and her parents survived her for only a short time; while the widower, in order to make his prison life endurable, paid his addresses to the daughter of the gaoler and eventually married her, as her father was pretty well to do in the world, the situation being a money-making one, as the order of that day was, as proved before the Irish House of Commons, that "persons were unlawfully kept in prison and loaded with irons, although not duly committed by a magistrate, until they had complied with the most exorbitant demands." When the Sham's term of a year's imprisonment ended, he had life to begin anew, and for some years we find him exercising many vocations, such as "setter" for excise officers, billiard-marker, hosier, &c. For an assault as "setter," he was again tried and again convicted, but nothing daunted, as his old webs were broken, he proceeded in the construction of new. In 1775, we not only find him "a hosier," but president of the Guild of Hosiers; and in 1780, his services were engaged by Mr. David Gibbal, conductor of the *Freeman's Journal*, then, as now, one of the most popular and well-conducted papers in Ireland. But from the period of the Sham Squire's connexion with it, it seems

to have degenerated, as in April, 1784, the journals of the Irish House of Commons show an "order" that "Francis Higgins, one of the conductors of the *Freeman's Journal*, do attend this House to-morrow morning." He did so, and escaped with a reproof. Having gained some knowledge of law in the solicitor's office, we now find him anxious to become an attorney, which end he accomplished by the aid and influence of his friend and patron John Scott, afterwards Chief Justice, and elevated to the peerage as Lord Clonmel, rather for his political talents than his professional ones. From 1784 to 1787, Higgins also acted as Deputy Coroner for Dublin. By a series of manœuvres he became the sole proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, and became at once what is called in Ireland "a Castle hack." Both as attorney and editor, the Sham Squire was now a man of importance, and many called in on him. Shrewd, sharp, and clever, with a glib tongue and a facile pen, no business was either too difficult or too dirty for him. He was made a justice of the peace by Lord Carhampton, who, as Colonel Luttrell, was designated by Grattan as "a Clever bravo, ready to give an insult, and perhaps capable of bearing one;" in fact, the last allusion was deserved, as Luttrell had been called "vile and infamous" by Scott without resenting it. Junius, writing to Lord North, says, "there is in this young man's conduct a strain of prostitution, which, for its singularity, I cannot but admire. He has discovered a new line in the human character. He has disgraced even the name of Luttrell." Lord Carhampton became Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, and during the outbreak of '98 was a merciless foe to the rebels who fell into his hands. Higgins, by this time, had become a great man, and lived in St. Stephen's Green, in magnificent style, keeping his coach and entertaining the nobility. He was also a loyalist of the rosier hue, and thought no mission too derogatory by which he might show his zeal. He attended divine service regularly, and that over, proceeded to "Crane Lane," in order to count over and receive his share of the gains in a gambling house of which he was principal proprietor, and which his influence with the police magistrates prevented the suppression of. Then to his editorial duties, which were to uphold the measures of Government and its officials, and to lam-

poon, cajole, or threaten all who dared to oppose them.

It was in the disastrous period of '98, however, that the Sham Squire's most sterling qualities came into active requisition, as evidenced by the following extract of a letter written by the Secretary Cooke to Lord Cornwallis, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. "Francis Higgins," he writes, "proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, was the person who procured for me all the intelligence respecting Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and got — to set him, and has given me otherwise much information—300*l.*;" meaning thereby that his Excellency should sanction that annual amount for "secret service," out of a sum of 15,000*l.*, specially laid aside for that purpose. Besides this, however, a lump sum of 1000*l.* was given to Higgins on the 20th June, 1798, for the betrayal of his friend; and, independent of this, a confederate of his, named Francis Magan, a barrister, and a close ally of Lord Edward, and who positively "set" the unfortunate nobleman at Higgins's instigation, received 600*l.* and a pension of 200*l.* per annum, for the worthy deed. Probably, the most startling of all those revelations of domestic treachery was the conduct of Leonard McNally, barrister-at-law, and selected "for his ability, truth, zeal, and sterling honesty," as Curran's assistant in defending the prisoners implicated in the rebellion. This fellow seems to have outsoared even Higgins and Magan in his duplicity, since not alone did he keep Government duly informed of the movements of the suspected, but when on their trial he exhibited the greatest activity in suggesting points for their defence, seconding his celebrated leader in his unwearied endeavours to save them, although he had previously made known to the law officers what course the accused men's counsel meant to take for the day, so that Curran and his legal friends were puzzled and surprised at having their best-concocted measures anticipated and baffled, although not a man of them ever thought of looking to "honest Mac" as the cause. For this and other services, McNally received some thousands, and was gratified, in addition, with a pension of 300*l.* per annum. Singularly enough, the terrible secrets of Magan and McNally were well kept until long after their deaths, and until the publication of "The Cornwallis Papers" enabled inquirers to strike on the true vein. Both

these men are said to have been corrupted by the Sham Squire, who seems to have been the Mephistopheles of his time; but a still more notorious "informer," because an open one, was Reynolds—Tom Reynolds, who was promised a pension of 2000*l.* a year and a seat in Parliament for his services, but did not receive quite so much. In 1798, however, he received 5000*l.* and a pension of 1000*l.* a year, and as his demands were always importunate, it is known that during the remainder of his life he extracted 45,740*l.* from his employers. Reynolds went abroad and died there, as Ireland would hardly have been for him either a safe or a pleasant residence; but Magan and McNally lived at home for many a goodly year, and were looked upon as honest men and sterling patriots to the last. Higgins did not long survive his victims; he died suddenly in 1802, worth 20,000*l.*, a greater part of which, strange to say, he left for charitable purposes!

In reviewing thus the history of this Irish Jonathan Wild and his detestable comrogués, our object must, we hope, be evident. Their lives and actions are instructive in many ways, and never promised to be more so than now. What happened then may happen again; treason will be dogged by traitors to the end. Fear and avarice are omnipotent counsellors, and when coupled with talent and ingenuity, marvellous indeed are the misery they can cause and the widespread devastation that travels in their track. That a needy and unscrupulous vagabond like Higgins should hunt his dearest friends to the scaffold, is not to be wondered at; but that men of position and education like Reynolds, McNally, and Magan should join in the chase and for years after look honest men in the face, evinces a hardihood of disposition and a callosity of conscience which, as a lesson, is instructive, and as an utter disregard of remorseful feeling, appears all but impossible. No doubt, such miscreants excuse their crimes on a plea of loyalty; and the plea would be all-sufficient, had they not stipulated for their price, and had they not exulted in receiving it. It is the duty of every peaceful citizen, not alone to keep the peace himself, but to watch the acts of those whose treacherous intentions he suspects, and openly to warn the proper authorities of his doubts, in order that their feasibility may be sifted; but there is something especially abhorrent to our

natures in those wretches who voluntarily plunge into the ranks of anarchy and disaffection at one time, and then, when cowardice or cupidity overcomes them, overleap all the boundaries of honour and faith, and trade on the blood or suffering of the fools and dupes who placed their liberties or lives in their safe-keeping. Fortunate it may be for humanity that such reptiles "float, scum-like, uppermost;" and however disgusting the process may be to listen to and reward them, equally fortunate must it be for anxious rulers when they appear; but ought it not to be a wholesome though terrible lesson to those who meditate treason against the state which protects them, when they find that society has been at all times saved, and anarchy prevented, not so much by the exhibition of open force or armed suppression, as by the Judas-like tongue of the faithless confederate, who "smiles, and smiles, and murders while he smiles," and who turns the groans and sufferings of his victims into means of pleasure or elevation for himself?

In the notes which Mr. Fitzpatrick has appended to his biography of the "Sham Squire," as "addenda," we have some well-authenticated and racy revelations of many of the singular Irish characters who flourished during the last thirty or forty years of the last century, and in the first few years of the beginning of this. Ireland appears to have been the "paradise of adventurers" in that day, as the times appear to have been out of joint, and the habits and general *morale* of the upper and middle ranks were to the last degree loose and irregular. As the manners and modes of action of a people are in a considerable degree fashioned and influenced by the example set them by those who are placed in authority over them, it is not too much to assert that a great deal of the lax morality, unscrupulous spirit, and general demoralization, were produced by some of the occupants of the vice-regal throne, and their "courts," the character and course of life of whom are painted by an author in anything but a seductive way. Brilliancy, show, pleasure, wit and extravagance were the order of the day; Lords-Lieutenant were either dissipated *roués*, or incompetent imbeciles, and in either case they were sure to be coerced or cajoled by a mercenary tribe of political adventurers, who directed their actions and influenced their minds. We at once see by the wholesale

corruption practised to bring about the Union, how utterly depraved must have been the men who openly or covertly prostituted themselves when it was in contemplation; and never was political profligacy more open and daring in its violation of honour, probity, and principle than in the abject submission of the Irish parliament, and its unhesitating anxiety to sell themselves, souls and bodies, to those who tempted them, and who had studied them far too accurately not to be sure of their prey. Amongst those who consented to accept the remuneration thus profusely offered them, the lawyers bore a very prominent part; in fact, Government could hardly have succeeded without their aid; of these, Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare and chancellor, was the most forward and efficient. There was never a man better adapted for the work he had to do. Bold, active, astute and unscrupulous, he could be all things to all men; those whom he could not cajole, he frightened; equally ready with the pen, the pistol and the tongue, he was neither to be daunted nor silenced; terrible in his vengeance, no windings of his victims could escape him; and extravagant in his generosity, (when the public purse had to bear the blunt) his jackalls and partisans felt that their reward was sure, and therefore never hesitated to comply with his most exact demands. Few men had a larger number of followers, therefore, and no man ever made a more unscrupulous use of them. He had nothing of the recusant about him, however, and fast and last he was consistent to his party and to the Protestant creed which he had adopted in early life, for he had been born and partly reared in the Roman Catholic faith. In his personal demeanour, he was a lion-hearted man; when hissed in the streets by the populace he calmly produced his pistols; and once, on hearing that a political meeting against the Union was being held, he rushed into the middle of the assembled mass, commanded the high-sheriff to quit the chair, and so closed the meeting. On the Bench he was equally fearless, and when recommended to beware of treachery, his answer was, "they dare not; I have made them as tame as cats." "If I live," he said, "to see the Union completed, to my latest hour I shall feel an honourable pride on reflecting on the share I had in contributing to effect it." He did live to see it, and to take his seat in the British parliament; but matters were altogether

altered there. In his maiden effort he was rebuked by Lord Suffolk, called to order by the Lord Chancellor, while the Duke of Bedford, indignantly snubbed him by exclaiming, "We would not bear such insults from our *equals*, and shall we, my lords, tolerate them at the hands of mushroom nobility?" while to cap the climax, Pitt, after hearing him, turned to Wilberforce, and said loud enough to be heard by Lord Clare, "Good G—d! did you ever, in all your life, listen to so thorough-faced a scoundrel as that!" Disappointed and despairing, he returned to Ireland, and died of a broken heart, while almost the last words he uttered to a friend, were, "Only to think of it! I that had all Ireland at my disposal cannot now procure the nomination of a single gauger!"

John Scott, afterwards Lord Chief Justice Clonmel, was another prominent actor in these busy times. His birth was lowly, but his talents were considerable; he was light and flippant rather than profound, and he felt to the last a terrible mortification that his claims had been postponed to those of Lord Clare. He had neither the grasp of mind, nor the unhesitating manner of the Chancellor, however; he was apt to surround himself with companions, like the "Sham Squire," for instance, who might be pleasant but were by no means reputable. Besides, his character for probity was distrusted; his fast uprise in life was his wholesale appropriation of the property of a Catholic friend, which he held in trust, as Catholics, at that time, could not retain property in their hands, and which he refused to disgorge. He was both venal and vindictive, and but too often prostituted his authority in pursuit of his passions. On one occasion, however, he was signally discomforted. A man of the name of Magee, who owned and edited the *Evening Post*, had frequently come under the lash, and was treated with no mercy. Magee's vengeance took a curious form. Lord Clonmel was an ardent lover of horticulture, and had spent many thousand pounds in making his suburban villa a "model." Magee knew this, and as the chief demesne was skirted by an open common from which a thick hedge alone separated it, the journalist proclaimed a rural *fete*, on an enormous scale, to be held on the vacant ground, and to which the whole Dublin population, gentle and simple, were invited. Meats and liquors were

given to an unlimited extent, and, in the evening, when the "roughs" were primed with whiskey, several pigs (shaved and with their tails well soaped) were let out as part of the amusements of the day. By preconcert, the affrighted animals were driven against Lord Clonmel's inclosure, which they speedily overleaped, followed by the mob. Trees, shrubs, flowers, vases and statues were in a wonderfully short time demolished in the "fun," while, to make the matter still more deplorable, the owner of the property thus wantonly devoted to revenge, stood on the steps of his own hall-door, and with alternate fits of deprecation and entreaty besought the spoilers to desist, but in vain. Towards the close of his life, Lord Clonmel became a hypochondriac, and supposed himself to be a teapot, hardly ventured to stir abroad lest he should be broken. On one occasion, his great forensic antagonist, Curran, was told that Clonmel was going to die at last, and was asked if he believed it. "I believe," was the reply, "that he is scoundrel enough to live or die *just as it meets his convenience*." Shortly before his death he said to Lord Cloncurry, "My dear Val, I have been a fortunate man, or what the world calls so; I am chief justice and an earl; but were I to begin life again, I would rather be a chimney-sweeper, than consent to be connected with the Irish government."

Another "celebrity" was John Taler, "bully, butcher, and buffoon," who was afterwards a peer and a judge. He was a bravo in the house and a despot on the bench. He jested with the wretched he condemned, and seemed never so happy as when the scaffold was before his eyes. He was ignorant but ferocious, and when he could not conquer an opponent he browbeat him.

"Give me a long day, my lord," said a culprit, whom he had just doomed.

"I am sorry to say I can't oblige you, my friend," replied Lord Norbury, smiling; "but I promise you a strong rope, which I suppose will answer your purpose as well."

When he died, and was about to be lowered into the grave himself, the tackle was rather short.

"Tare-an-agers, boys, don't spare the rope on his lordship; don't you know he was always fond of it!" said one of the standers-by.

"I never saw a human face that so closely resembles that of a bull-dog!"

remarked one barrister to another in court.

"Let him get a grip of your throat, and you will find the resemblance still closer," was the reply.

These and a hundred others, their equals, instruments, and subordinates, may be supposed to represent the Irish "turnspit" element, of which we have spoken at the commencement of our article; it must be acknowledged, however, that in contradistinction to them, there were abounding examples of men of a different and far superior class, such as the Leinsters, Charlemonts, Plunketts, Currans, Ponsonbys, and so forth, who would have adorned any country, and who certainly contributed to relieve their own from the almost intolerable odium which the wholesale venal profligacy of a large number had brought upon it. Resolved as the English government of that day was to effect a "union" between the two countries, and to absorb the Irish parliament, it was but natural, and almost inevitable, that the *per fas aut nefas* principle should be the guiding one by which their object was to be gained. The Irish agent to effect it was one peculiarly well chosen, and in Lord Castlereagh were combined all those qualities which renders a clever man invincible. Subtle, specious, plausible, and fearless, he by a peculiar and unerring instinct, at once placed his eye on the men fitted for his purpose, and never quitted them until he made their claims irrevocable. He had, moreover (what many of his instruments had not), a thorough belief in the national efficacy of the measure he was employed to carry; and he foresaw that if Ireland were ever to thrive, or to become useful either to itself or the empire, its rule must be taken out of the hands of a representation, which if not careless and ignorant were corrupt and bigoted, and which selfishly postponed every claim and obstructed every measure which did not tend directly to its own influence and aggrandisement. It was not his fault if the necessary concessions which were to accompany the incorporation failed; nor could he have foreseen that more than a quarter of a century should pass away before religious toleration should quash that fell ascendancy to which all the national evils might fairly be attributed, so the insane bigotry of a mad monarch be allowed to override all the dictates of honour, justice, and good faith. There can be no doubt that he was an unscrupulous

pulous and ambitious man, but his after career amply proved that he was a statesman of enlarged views, and that if Ireland had reason to object to his earlier proceedings, and the wide sphere of political profligacy they engendered and made manifest, England at least had a right to thank him for results which under a more conscientious or highly-principled monster might never have been attained.

Finally, we have taken the trouble to put down these observations as the result of our perusal of Mr. Fitzpatrick's book; not alone because we think it is clever, and has appeared at a fitting time, but in order to place before our readers (our Irish readers particularly), and we are thankful to say that their name is legion, the pregnant examples it affords of the wholesale treachery which has always attended attempts at revolution or revolt. Even in the present miserable Fenian movement we have witnessed the same treachery under trust, and the same unhesitating determination to earn the wages of blood on a small scale, which the "SHAM SQUIRE" and his gang practised on a larger and more profitable one in a former day. It is in the nature of such attempts that such things should be; that the tempter should become the vic-

tim; and that the mind, which can at one time contemplate without remorse the scenes of plunder, of murder, of misery and demoralization which as surely await on rebellion as night follows day, shall be equally ready at another, at the suggestions of fear or of cupidity, to turn upon their seducers, and offer them up to justice as a medium of self-preservation for themselves. Fortunately for the national character, both the conspirators and the denouncers belonged to a class far removed from respectability, influence, or rank. No man of gentle blood has sullied his lineage by consorting with them; no respectable citizen has been tainted with their slime; the heart of Ireland is sound; it has a manly self-reliance in its own power to procure such redress as it may require by legitimate means; and a common-sense feeling that to live under the constitution of England is far better than to submit to the democratic rule of would-be republican leaders, the main points of whose programme of government points to the widest confiscation of property, the rudest violation of religious influence, and the most unmitigated hatred of what all honest men or true patriots would lay down their lives to protect.

HAROLD.

THE ADVENTURE.

ALTHOUGH the act of Parliament which gave to Ireland an additional court of justice, called "The Incumbered Estates Court," and although the subsequent operations of that court have given to Irish (and English) creditors a tolerable certainty of recovering the enormous sums due to them by their extravagant compatriots of the upper classes, who, from father to son, had gone on for years mortgaging, and anticipating, and squandering their rents as long as money was to be had "by hook or by crook," no matter how usurious the terms of the compact might be, still there can be no doubt that the application of the measure has caused a great deal of misery and sorrow to many of the individuals exposed to it, and has brought many a proud name low, and many a respectable family into straits, which, however reasonable the proceedings against them may have been, cannot be thought of without a considerable amount of sympathy and regret. Some there were who yielded to their inevitable misfortunes with a good grace, and with the remnants of fortune left them commenced life in a new grade, and pushed on spiritedly, supported by the feeling that they were doing their best; others there were who battled every inch of the way, and only submitted to beggary and ruin when their attorney warned them that their last shift had been made, and that henceforth, in his opinion, they would not have "a legal leg to stand on;" while others again, disdaining either to fight or to fly, retreated to some forlorn corner, and in a misanthropical spirit vegetated in their poverty-stricken dignity, and lived on, if not forgetful of the world, at least "by the world forgot," battling with poverty as best they could, and consoling themselves by a feeling of utter hatred and contempt for those who had presumed to purchase and take possession of the lands over which they and their forefathers had for centuries exercised all but regal control.

Amongst those of this latter class was Sir Brian O'Brian McMurragh, who commenced life as possessor of a *nominal* rent-roll of twelve thousand pounds sterling per annum, although in reality, between mortgages, and rent-charges, and incumbrances of every possible shape and hue, probably five would represent the

net sum received by the proprietor. Still, it was not the age of economical reflection, nor was the young baronet either a financier or a philosopher. He had been cradled in luxury, and bowed down to with slavish servility; he had been educated at Cambridge, and, one way or other, his bills there had been met, though not always pleasantly, by his father. He had travelled over Europe, Asia, and a good part of America, for four years, and at last a letter had caught him at Vienna, telling him that his father, Sir Patrick, had died suddenly, "full of years and honours," and that he was now the representative of one of "the oldest and best families in Ireland," and possessor of its splendid estates, &c. &c. On his return home he was surrounded by troops of friends and hordes of sycophants, and for some years was far too much engaged in pleasure not to let business attend to itself. His fathers had lived "like kings," and he had too much the spirit of an Irish gentleman to let prudence or economy come "between the wind and his nobility." He married, too, and chose for his wife a far-descended and beautiful pauper, with tastes to the full as reckless and extravagant as his own. This lady had brought him a daughter, who lived, and in four years after a son, who had died a few hours after his birth, and whose death preceded that of its mother by a single day. This calamity was said to have been caused by the lady's obstinacy in travelling twenty miles to a ball, on returning from which her carriage was overturned by a drunken coachman, and she herself received the injuries of which she died. After her death Sir Brian became more careless and reckless than ever; and so matters were, when the legislature gave the *coup-de-grace* to his career. His spirits sunk as his debts mounted; he saw from the first that ruin was inevitable; section after section of his splendid estates were put up for sale and swept away; until at last all that remained to him was a half-ruined building, called "The Black Abbey," which he sometimes used as a shooting and fishing lodge in happier days, and a tract of mountain land, wild, and for the most part sterile and unprofitable, and for part of which he paid rent. In the pre-

sent gloomy temper of his soul, however, it suited his humour. The building stood half-way up a mountain, the base of which was almost washed by the waters of a broad lake, or lough, and from which it was only separated by a slip of meadow. The lake itself was several miles in extent, and at least three miles and a half broad immediately opposite the abbey, to which the only access from the mainland was by a skiff or boat, except you chose to travel several miles round so as to head the lake. It was a romantic but utterly desolate retreat, made still more so, if possible, by the sullen gloom which had now taken possession of the fallen man. He had secured some remnants of a once splendid library, and sometimes amused himself by teaching his daughter Eva, although there were weeks at one time when a restless and morose spirit beset him, and then with a gun in his hand he wandered idly through the mountains, or with a boy, named Padreèn, took to his yacht, and was never to be seen on shore, sometimes sleeping on board, or bivouacking on some of the many small islands which dotted the loch.

At such times Eva was left in possession of the abbey, companioned by old Deb Dermody and her husband Moque (or Moses) who, of all his riotous followers, had stuck steadily to Sir Brian, and would not be shaken off. Before utter ruin had come upon them, Eva had been for a year, or somewhat better, at a boarding school, the mistress of which had evidently done her duty by the child. The little girl indeed "showed blood" in more ways than one; she was small but hardy, and without being critically beautiful, she was very lovely to look upon; her features were delicate but full of animation, and her movements were that of a thorough-bred Arab, or a full-blooded hound of the present race. Her temper was lively, but all her instincts were genial and generous, and she had, in a particular manner, the gift of conciliating the affectionate regards of all who came within the sphere of her innocent influence. True it was, her worshippers were neither numerous nor select. A few hinds, employed by the "steward," (as Moque was magniloquently called) to till the ground and attend to the "stock," consisting of mountain sheep and Kerry cows, together with stray "cadgers," pedlars, and other wanderers who occasionally visited the neighbour-

hood, and the "neighbours," on both banks of the lough (the hither and thither) consisting for the most part of an amphibious sort of population, who netted fish in the lake, or cultivated patches of ground to keep life and soul together. Besides these, now and then the "agent" of the estate, Mr. Redmond Hennessey, sometimes visited at the abbey, to look for or receive the rents paid by Sir Brian, and another and more welcome occasional visitor was Father John Considine, the P. P. of a long, straggling parish, which extended over both sides of the mountain, and whose house and church lay in the valley which separated Ballintopher, on which Sir Brian lived, from Ballinteer, a higher hill which ran beyond. Sir Brian and his daughter belonged to the old faith, and as the priest was a large-minded, liberal man, with a well-cultivated mind, and a good-humoured and even jovial temperament, his visits always enlivened the abbey, and sometimes won a smile from its proprietor. His literary tastes and recollections, also, were exceedingly useful to the young girl, particularly as he sometimes ran up to Dublin, or even over to London or Paris in the summer holidays, from whence he was sure to bring back the gossip for Sir Brian, and a budget of new books, periodicals, and songs for his favourite.

Thus matters went on for some years—nothing better, nothing worse, apparently—until Eva was in her eighteenth year. The large estates originally owned by Sir Brian had, in a great measure, fallen into the hands of a single proprietor, Sir Adams Jessop, a rich London merchant and banker, who had purchased them by lots on speculation, because, in the first place, they were sold low (as at first all the Irish estates were under the Incumbered Estates Court) and because he had advanced large sums to the holders of the mortgages, &c., with which they were embarrassed, and thus sought to recoup himself. Since they came into his possession he had been over for a few days twice—once to look over the property, and again to appoint an agent, recommended to him by some neighbouring proprietors, who all spoke of Mr. Redmond Hennessey as a man of zeal and industry, who always had his employer's interest at heart, and detested a non-paying or dilatory tenant as he did a mad dog. Under this gentleman's supervision the estates put on a new aspect; rents were raised and covenants

insisted on, such as "the oldest inhabitant" had never even dreamed of, and as Mr. Hennessey was a solicitor as well as an agent, processes followed defalcations, and the only sure road to his friendly sympathy was punctuality in payment, and liberality (in the shape of gifts, such as fowl, butter, eggs, fish, socks, flannel, and so forth) from those who had favours to ask or bargains to make. Of course he was a thriving man, but it was remarked that illicit distillation, poaching, and illegal practices of all kinds were greatly on the increase, and when Sir Brian heard of all this, and saw that additional magistrates were sworn in, and a large draft of constabulary and preventive police sent into the new barracks specially constructed for them, he grimly triumphed in the change, and made no secret of his sympathy with the malcontents, since, as he said, "What better could be expected on the estate of an absentee?"

Neither did matters seem to mend when Sir Adams Jessop died somewhat suddenly, and was succeeded by his only son, now Sir William Jessop, who was understood to be a gay young man, of indolent habits and roving propensities, and who seemed to have even less sympathy for his Irish tenants than his father—if, indeed, that were possible. Mr. Hennessey's power and authority were now unlimited, and stories were told of his rapacity and impatience of all control which appeared incredible. Whole townships were depopulated by his *fiat*; families were reduced to beggary and desperation by his determination to "make the estate pay," and some said (for every man has his enemies) that when his new master informed him by letter of appeals being made, and of his wish that they should be attended to, and the appellants dealt more lightly with, his answer invariably was, that the accusers were established liars, who would be the first to shoot down Sir William himself, should he ever be foolish enough to venture amongst them. This risk, however, the young landlord seemed by no means inclined to run, as it was rumoured he had built one of the most superb yachts that ever honoured old ocean by floating on its bosom, and was about to test its capacity by a three years' cruise.

PART II.

LIKE all inland lakes of considerable ex-

tent, that which lay before the windows of the Black Abbey was subject to violent changes of temper on slight and sudden provocation. In the morning it would lie dimpling and smiling before you, as full of placid beauty and as incapable of a wrathful outburst as a ball-room belle; while at noon its aspect would become as terrible as that of a virago, whose whole family and neighbourhood trembles at and flies from the fearful storm which no submission can allay. On such occasions, considerable danger menaced those who sailed on business or pleasure over the waters of the lake, and it so happened that on the eve of a September day, the yacht of Sir Brian McMurrough was caught in one of those sudden bursts which had swept down from the mountains, accompanied by torrents of rain and violent thunder and lightning, although in the morning, and until after mid-day, there had been no warning of a gale.

To make matters worse, Miss McMurrough was known to be on board the boat, as she had accompanied her father to a town at the other end of the lake to make household purchases for the coming winter; and the amount of agitation evidenced by a group of men who stood on the banks of the lough and witnessed the fearful struggles of the little craft amounted gradually to extreme terror as they saw the principal sail give way and flutter in the wind like ribands, while the waves washed over the helpless vessel and threatened speedily to engulf her.

"It will never do, boys," at last said one of the men, "to stand idly by and see the best blood of the country die the death of a drowned dog without putting out a hand or an oar to save him. Run up, Patsey, and tell Mick Mackesy to come down at once, while we launch *Sheelah*, who never turned her back to the whitest horses that ever galloped over any water that ever ran; and don't let grass grow to your heels, for a life may hang on every step you take. Away with you."

"Has he far to go?" asked another of the group.

"About a mile, sir," replied the man, touching his cap to the questioner, who had been a stranger to him until an hour or two before; "and the worst of it is Mick may be out or drunk, and then we're done for."

"Don't send for him, then," said the stranger; "I have pulled an oar at college

and elsewhere, and am pretty well up to the management of a boat. Where is your craft?"

"Yonder in the cove, sir; but it's a bad business."

"Then the sooner we get rid of it the better, my friend," said the energetic stranger. "Come, boys, I have a sovereign or two to spare, and I promise you that no man shall lose by his humanity. Now, my friend, lead on."

"May I never," said the first speaker, whose name was Andy Monahan, "but you've a stout heart in your buzzom, whoever you are, and it's a pity to baulk you."

In an incredibly short space of time the boat was launched, and the gentle *Sheelah* fled on her mission of mercy, impelled by four pair of hands who knew right well how to handle her. By this time the baronet's yacht was a sheer wreck, and although the owner and his boy struggled hard to keep her head to the wind, it was evident that if she did not fill and go down, she would drive bodily on the ragged rocks which shot perpendicularly up on that part of the shore towards which she was drifting. The boat reached her safely, however, and by the excellent management of the volunteer boatman, mainly, Miss McMurrough was got into the shore-boat, and her father and the boy followed, while an anchor was let go in the yacht and she was then left to her fate.

In moments of great danger and excitement there is little room for ceremony or introduction, and, on the present occasion, only a few words, and those of direction, passed on any side. Sir Brian's main care was for his daughter, who, drenched and terrified as she must necessarily be, bore up wonderfully, and even managed to murmur a few words of gratitude to the stranger who so sedulously bore her into the boat, and, so far as he could, protected her. When all was done, the boat's head was again turned to the shore, and "in less than no time," as Andy promised, its wave-worn load was safely landed, wet, weary, and chilled, but otherwise unharmed. After a few words in private with Andy, the boat-owner, Sir Brian turned to the stranger and addressed him.

"I am told by my friend here, sir," he said, "that it is to your dexterity and courage my own preservation and that of my daughter is mainly due. I trust that you will accompany me to my residence,

and allow me, when I have regained my presence of mind, more suitably to thank you for the signal service you have done me than I can find words adequately to do now."

"You are very kind, sir," was the prompt and cordial reply, "and I shall be very happy to accept your hospitable offer, as I am altogether a stranger here, and the boatman tells me that I will have to cross the mountain before I can reach an inn."

In the meanwhile, the storm had lulled considerably, and half a score of women had come from the surrounding cottages, some with cloaks, blankets, and shawls for "Miss Eva," and some with "poteen" jars or bottles, to "warm the hearts" of the rescued mariners. But Sir Brian persisted in going home, and refused the proffers of profuse hospitality pressed on him, accepting a "wrap" for his daughter, and sanctioning the attendance of the stranger, on whose offered arm she leaned as they began their walk to the Abbey. Before they set off, however, the stranger found time to thrust five sovereigns into Andy's hand, saying to him, in a low voice—

"Divide them among your brave comrades, my good friend, and say nothing to Sir Brian. I only wish I could make it ten times as much, since every man of them is worth—nay, don't refuse them, or I shall say that you are too proud to be obliged by a friend. You and I must become better acquainted hereafter."

He hastened away, and Andy pocketed the gratuity, which he had neither expected nor was at all anxious to receive.

"We'll drink his health anyway," he said, as he pocketed the money; "and if he stays in the country, we'll find a way to pay him back, if not in his own coin, maybe in one that'll please him as well. A brave chap he is, and feathers an oar as well as myself, who was born, I may say, with one in my right hand."

The stranger had requested that a small, neat knapsack, which he had flung down when he stripped for the lake, should be sent after him to the Abbey, at which, on arriving at it, he was warmly welcomed by the master, and was ushered to a spare bedchamber by Deb Dermody herself, who had been advertised of the coming of the party by a "runner," and had everything prepared to receive them.

When the stranger had dried his clothes and changed his linen by the huge turf fire which blazed in the room allotted

him, he descended to the "refectory," or general dining and drawing-room, and so called from its use by the monks "lang syne." He found the baronet and his daughter ready to receive him, a large fire in the grate, a table ready laid for dinner, and a fresh arrival in the sturdy person of "Father John," who had come on one of his periodical visitations. Evidently, the good priest had heard of the adventure, and of the gallant part which the stranger had performed in it, and, when presenting him his hand, had good-humouredly thanked him for helping to preserve two lives that were so precious to all who knew their worth. The young man, in his turn, found it necessary to introduce himself, and stated that he was an idle rover, with some taste for drawing, literature, and music, and who came on an exploratory expedition to see what he could pick up in the way of old airs or legends, or new scenery, to forward some speculations of his own. His name was Redland, and he considered himself fortunate in having been able to assist Sir Brian and Miss McMurrrough in their difficulty, &c.

The dinner was good. Fish from the lake, game from the mountain, fowl from the stubble, and a capital ham, fed and cured by the "steward," who prided himself on fattening and killing swine. A bottle or two of wine and *poteen* and hot water without stint for those who chose it, although none of the party mixed even "their second tumbler," except Sir Brian himself, who sometimes "drowned grief" in that way, unless rumour belied him.

The night sped pleasantly by. Redland was evidently a gentleman, and both the baronet and the priest knew what that meant right well. He was light and cheerful without being frivolous, and seemed more inclined to ask for information from others than to obtrude his own. He spoke well without speaking too much, and greatly pleased Father John by the interest he took in Irish affairs. In the course of the evening the management of the "Jessop property" was spoken of, and incidentally the character of the agent was discussed.

"After all," said Sir Brian, "the devil is not so black as he is painted; Hennessey is not the worst among the bad. I for my own part have always found him civil and obliging, and not at all pressing for the rent of my miserable holding, which as you well know, Father John, I never ought to be called on to pay a

shilling for; but Hennessey's not to blame for that; no more I dare say than for other things laid to his charge. He sent Eva a whole chestful of books to read last week, and baskets of fruit from his hot-houses, although I dare say he was the first of his family that had any better sort of house than a mud cabin to rear pigs instead of grapes and peaches in."

"He is a confirmed scoundrel, however, and a curse to the country that holds him," ejaculated the priest, sternly and gravely.

"You ought to blame his absentee master rather than him," said Sir Brian.

"Under your pardon, Sir Brian, I ought to do no such thing," persisted the priest; "his master knows nothing of his doings, of that I am certain, or if he did, as an English merchant, as a man of humanity, he would be the first to reject and put down such intolerable tyranny, which is equally miserable and profitless. In fact, the fellow is true to no one or nothing but his own selfish interests, for he throws the blame of his own cruelties on his employer, and perpetrates enormities sufficient to draw down God's vengeance, under the plea of being driven to it by a man to whom such cheese-parings and petty gains can be of no possible account."

"I should think then, sir," said the stranger, "that it is high time for him to look to his interests and good name, if your account be true, and my only wonder is that he delays it so long."

"Poh! the present proprietor is a gay young fashionable fop, they were called dandies in my day, who well pockets his rents and only thinks of his Irish tenants when his purse runs dry," said Sir Brian, bitterly.

"Is not that a harsh estimate, papa," said Eva, gently and timidly, "when you can only speak by surmise?"

"Then why is he not here?" asked Sir Brian; "why does he leave his tenantry to be ground to powder or driven to desperation, if he could cure it by his presence?"

"That question may be answered too," said the priest; "it is Hennessey's interest to keep him away as long as he can, and you may be pretty sure that he has painted us in colours that would not waste a long journey to witness them. I, however, have taken upon myself the liberty of writing to Sir William Jessop, and it will not be my fault if he does not

see reason in my statements to come and have a look at us himself."

"You will get into a mess with Hennessey if that comes to his ears," said the baronet, laughing.

"He knows right well I don't care a farthing for either his friendship or his enmity," replied Father John, "'Be just, and fear not,' is my motto, and if it please God to let him injure me, I will bow to the chastisement, since it will be in a good cause."

"I think that your act was both justifiable and merciful," said the stranger; "and I should say that Sir William will be little better than a heartless fool if he should not respond to your application as he ought."

"He'll never do it," said the obstinate host; "he'll be thinking of his tallow and cotton, and molasses, as matters infinitely superior in his estimation to Irish Kernes and their wrongs."

"Ought we not to hope and pray that he will take a more considerate view of Father John's application to him, papa?" said Eva. "He is an English gentleman, and they are always alive to the interests of humanity—at least I have always heard so."

"And you have heard right, my dear Miss Eva, so we'll hope for the best," replied the priest. "So now let us have one cup of tea, and afterwards we'll trouble you for 'Love's Young Dream,' or 'The Minstrel Boy,' or 'Silent, oh! Moyle,' or 'The Young May Moon,' and I'll grumble a bass in 'St. Senanus and the Lady,' if Mr. Redland will help us out."

The tea was drunk, and the songs sung to the accompaniment of a wild Irish harp, which made excellent music in Eva's fair hands. A light supper followed, and then to bed, after various arrangements for the following days, which Sir Brian insisted Redland should give to them; while Father John, whose time was his own, as he had a curate, promised to remain at the Abbey also for a few days.

Near to midnight Redland found himself in a very tidy and comfortable room with a blazing fire, and as he undressed his thoughts took the form of soliloquy.

"Pleasant enough all this," he said, as he sat before the fire, "and not a bad beginning at all events. Sir Brian is a gentleman certainly, although his prejudices—natural, too—master him; the priest, however, is my strong card, and I must stick to him; while as to Eva—Miss

McMurrough—who in the world could have thought of finding such a choice and beautiful blossom in such a site? She is equally rich in blood and beauty, and no mistake, and her soprano has a great deal of the Jenny Lind fine *timbre* about it. I'm in luck at any rate, so here goes to enjoy and make the most of it." Thus saying he went to bed.

For the next few days a great deal was done. The yacht was recovered and made available; fish were caught, birds shot, views taken, cottages visited, histories detailed, dinners eaten, songs sung, and conversations enjoyed, in all which the stranger took part, making himself both useful and agreeable; putting Sir Brian in mind of "the good days," charming the priest by his humane and liberal philosophy, and gradually stealing into Eva's good graces so far, that when one evening he said to her he must think of going, she sighed, and said plaintively—

"Yes, that's the worst of your coming, Mr. Redland, for when you leave us how shall we ever get over your loss? Though of course one ought to be always prepared for misfortune, and no one who wished you well would think of detaining you in so dreary a place."

"Dreary! it has been a Paradise to me, I assure you, Miss McMurrough, and when duty demands my presence elsewhere, inclination will be sure to draw me back by the hair of the head, and— and by the cords of the heart, as well."

The latter part of the sentence was spoken partly to himself and escaped Eva's ear.

It so chanced that, the next morning, Father John left them, after a hearty invitation to Redland to visit his cottage at the side of the mountain; but it was doomed that his place was supplied about midday, or rather towards dinner-time, by no less a person than the formidable "agent," Mr. Redmond Hennessey himself, who announced to his "friend," Sir Brian, that having a day to spare he came to tax his hospitality.

"Besides," he said, as he and Sir Brian sat in conclave, while Redland and Eva were wandering on the banks of the lough, "besides, Sir Brian, a report has reached me that a stranger has intruded himself on your hospitality whom I think you ought to beware of."

"He is a fine young fellow and saved my life," replied the baronet.

"Specious, I dare say; flippant, but anything but safe company, I should say,

if my information be correct," said Mr. Hennessey.

"What has he done?" demanded Sir Brian.

"A great deal that he should have left undone," was the reply. "I have heard of the goings on of him and that confounded priest, whose finger is in every man's dish; of their visitings to tenants, and their bribes for information; in point of fact, I look upon him as a dangerous person—one of those English Radicals, who, driven from their own country, come to ours to plunge into convulsion and confusion."

"I think you are mistaken in your estimate," replied Sir Brian.

"You will change your opinion by-and-bye," said Hennessey; "the proof of the pudding is the eating of it; I have received three threatening letters since he has been here, short as it is, and I mean, after dinner, to draw him out a bit, and make him show his true colours, if possible."

"You had better not, perhaps," was the reply; "he is an outspoken young fellow, and seems to fear no man, no matter how potential he may think himself. Better let him alone, for your detectives have tracked the wrong man this time, Mr. Hennessey, I assure you."

"We shall see, however," said the agent, made more obstinate by opposition.

The young people did not return until dinner was ready, and then Redland and Hennessey were introduced to each other. The agent was superciliously cold, and Redland hardly civil, so reserved was his brow. It seemed to be "hate at first sight on both sides." Under these circumstances, conversation was slow and restrained; Mr. Hennessey talked of himself a good deal; of the improvements in his house, his grounds, and gardens, and of his associations with the aristocracy of the district; while Redland conversed with Eva in a low voice, mercilessly inattentive to the utterings of the great man, which were frequently interrupted by the ill-repressed laughter of Eva at what her companion was saying. At last, however, dinner was done, and when Eva left the room, Mr. Hennessey began his "drawing out" system by a point-blank question, addressed to Redland.

"I understand, Mr. Redland," he said, "that you have been very particularly anxious in your inquiries about the state of Sir William Jessop's extensive property. I presume you are on another,

and mean to publish your travels, in a neat volume, with wood-cut illustrations."

"No, no; you are altogether mistaken," was the chilly reply; "I am content to read books, without having the ambition to write them."

"Well, then, the greater compliment to us poor Irish that such an independent inquirer should come amongst us," said Hennessey. "I hope you are satisfied with what you have observed."

"I do not wish to answer your question, sir, since, without intending it, I might give you offence," was the guarded reply.

"Pray don't spare me, young gentleman," sneered the agent, "as I am used to misconstruction, and have shoulders broad enough to bear it. You find fault with my management, of course?"

"Not of course, sir," replied Redland; "but if you insist on having my opinion, I think that Sir William Jessop's estates are very wretchedly managed indeed."

"Hah! that is candour with a vengeance!" said the agent, startled out of his self-possession; "you must be a disinterested observer to jump at once to so decided a conclusion."

"I had my eyes and ears, sir, and made use of them," answered the composed stranger; "where everything is miserable, and everybody wretched, on an estate which pays eight or ten thousand a year to its owner, somebody must be to blame, since there can be no possible cause for it."

"Go on, sir—go on," said the agent, winking at Sir Brian.

"At your invitation, I will, sir," was the cool reply. "Seeing what I have seen, and hearing what I have heard, I do not wonder that discontent and disaffection should prevail amongst men whom no industry can raise, and no good conduct can protect. It is the skeletons of a population that I have been among, and not men and women of flesh and blood; and as to their homes, I profess that the iceberg hut of an Esquimaux would be less inhabitable. I shall call Sir William Jessop a bad Englishman, and a worse Christian, if he shall persist in sanctioning a state of things, which, of course, must be out of your control, since I presume you act according to your orders, and cannot help witnessing the terrible miseries which you are every day compelled to increase."

"You have been in America, sir, I

suppose?" was the irrelevant reply of Hennessey.

"I have—both north and south."

"And have been a practitioner of 'Stump' oratory? I thought so," replied Hennessey, with a coarse laugh. "Here's to your health, young Cicero, and a better way of thinking to you!"

"To both of us, sir, if you please," replied Redland, touching his glass, and then leaving the room.

"A dangerous fellow, just what I thought him," said Hennessey, when the door closed. "But now that I see his game, I am prepared for him; we'll have no stump orators—no Captain Rocks or Sergeant Starlights amongst us here, if we can help it, Sir Brian. But let it rest—let it rest; we have not quite done with him yet. And now, Sir Brian, to turn to a pleasanter theme; the last time I was here I did myself the honour of making known to you my ardent good-wishes for a closer connexion with you, through the medium of Miss McMurrough, whose humble slave I have long been."

"I have trusted the matter to my daughter, Mr. Hennessey, and find that her objections are insuperable; she would not listen to me, except at the risk of tears and hysterics," said Sir Brian. "I am obliged to you, but we will speak no more of it if you please."

"I am sorry for it," replied Hennessey; "as I thought that under such circumstances, I might find means to allow your arrears, and the fifty borrowed from myself to stand over. I fear I can't promise anything of the sort now, but I suppose you are prepared to back up, and the sooner the better, as Sir William is pressing hard for money and must have it. Let me have all, if possible, before Saturday, and so save trouble to both of us. With thanks for your hospitality, and wishing you a safer guest under your roof, I bid you good-night."

In three minutes more he had left the house, and Sir Brian felt that he had an enemy for life. He said nothing to his guest or his daughter, however, save that Mr. Hennessey had been obliged to leave—on business, he supposed.

The next day, Mogue, who had been at the other side of the lake, brought back word that there was "great ructions" in the town of Ballinlough, as Mr. Hennessey had been fired at early that morning, on riding to one of his farms, and that "a whole pound of bullets had lodged in his hat." Everything was in commotion;

the "peelers" were out, and "a whole bunch (bench?) of magistrates were to meet immediately." So that day passed over; but the next morning a new state of affairs occurred. About ten o'clock, half a dozen policemen, with an officer at their head, arrived at the Abbey, and showed a warrant of arrest for Mr. William Redland, as a suspicious person, &c., with a civil intimation that his body was to be produced before the bench of magistrates, now sitting at Ballinlough. Of course, to hear was to obey.

"My accuser will make nothing of it, sir," said Redland to the officer, "and if I really wished him evil he has now afforded me an opportunity of doing it."

"You may require bail, however," said Sir Brian, "so I have dispatched a messenger for Father John, although we can easily defeat him by an *alibi*."

"Or by telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," said Redland, with a smile.

When they arrived at the court-house of Ballinlough, they found at least a dozen magistrates in full conclave, who all scowled on "the prisoner," as Hennessey was their friend.

Redland at once confronted this august assembly, and without waiting for his accuser to begin, thus commenced:—

"In order to save time and trouble, gentlemen," he said, "I think it necessary to make a confession for which you may be unprepared."

"Too late, my fine fellow," said Hennessey; "you should have thought of what you were about before. I heard you myself at Sir Brian's table spout as much treason as would set all Ireland in a flame. I do not wish to prosecute you vindictively, however, although I was near losing my life by your preaching and teaching, so if you will undertake to leave the country, after telling us who and what you are, I will give up the prosecution, and you may go about your business."

"You are very considerate, sir, and I accept your offer," said the undismayed prisoner. "I acknowledge, therefore, that both my name and my occupation have been assumed——"

"I knew it—I could swear it from the first moment I laid eyes upon you," said the triumphant agent; "but go on; you have told us who and what you are not, now oblige us with similar information as to whom and what you are."

"Willingly, sir," replied the young

man. "My real name is not Redland but Jessop—a baronet by rank, an Englishman by birth, and your employer, I think, into the bargain. I am called, then, Sir William Jessop, and my occupation here has been quietly to supervise my estates—and a very wretched supervision it was, as I had the honour to tell you in Sir Brian MacMurrough's house. I am willing to remain under arrest until I am fully identified, and as you are not vindictively influenced I trust you will accept bail for my appearance when called upon."

Hennessey was foiled and defeated by his employer's ruse, and he saw it. He was crest-fallen, too, for his warmest friends crowded round "Sir William," and left him in the lurch, although his employer was more merciful.

"I, and my father before me," he said, "have been to blame for not sufficiently making ourselves acquainted with the serious responsibility we had undertaken. I have seen with my own eyes that my estates are sadly mismanaged, and I have reason to complain that your conduct has

been both selfish and unjust; selfish, in thinking solely of your own interests and unjust in saddling me with your faults. We cannot act longer together, Mr. Hennessey, and you will be good enough to prepare your accounts, so as that they may be duly audited as soon as possible. I will remain the guest of Sir Brian MacMurrough, at whose house I am for some little time to be found."

Hennessey left the court-house, degraded and dismissed, leaving with him "his hat with the pound of bullets in it." "I always knew it was Miles Casidy the driver put them in it by Hennessey's order," said Andy Monahan, "and more betoken he hinted as much himself yesterday after the seventh glass."

Sir William Jessop went back to the Black Abbey in triumph; and never left it until he had made Eva MacMurrough his bride, so that the estates still run with the "auld stock," and Sir Brian and Father John, who is almoner-general to Sir William, are as happy as kings.

SIGMA.

THE DYING YEAR.

A SOFT sad fluttering fills the air,
 'Tis the last faint sigh of the dying year;
 Like all that is earthly he's passing away,
 And though prized so well, yet he cannot stay;
 Low droops his head on his weary breast;
 Speak softly, tread lightly, break not his rest.

A true, kind friend, has he been to me,
 And for ever blessed will his memory be;
 He has strewn my path with life's sweetest flowers,
 And all too swift passed his rosy hours;
 The loved one's he's spared too, not one I miss
 From our household hearth of domestic bliss.

On the cold wind is borne his funeral knell,
 And the bright stars look down their last farewell;
 From afar comes the echo of joyous bells,
 And thoughts deep and voiceless my bosom swell;
 'Tis a solemn hour sacred to prayer,
 And breathings which find no answer here.

THE BROKEN SEAL.

WHILE doing business in Carrolton I became principal agent for the sale of one of the most popular patent medicines of the day. Or, I should say—a medicine that was destined to become most popular; for it was not until after I took hold of the matter that the extensive system of advertising was adopted which served to open the eyes of the public to the virtues of our panacea. In the business of my general agency I employed many travelling agents, and of course quite a number of clerks were required at home. Matters flourished with me; our methods of work had become systematized; and our orders for goods were about as numerous as we could attend to.

It would hardly be expected, where so many orders and remittances were daily coming in from all quarters, that a letter might not once in a while get lost or mislaid; but I was at length forced to the painful conclusion that everything was not as it should be in my own establishment. It was my usual habit to take home with me such letters as were of a private and confidential character, and attend to them there. One evening as I sat at the table in my library, engaged in looking over a number of these missives, something caught my eye which caused me to let fall an exclamation of surprise.

"What is the matter, father?"

My oldest daughter, Eleanor, sat near me engaged in reading. I had not thought of her presence when I spoke; but still I feared not to trust her, for she was a girl of sense as well as intelligence.

"Have there been more blunders by the mails?" she added.

"No, no," said I, shaking my head.

"I fear I have discovered a trouble nearer home. Do you see this letter?"

"Yes."

"Well—it is from Brownsville, and happens to be from an architect who sends me the plans for a store-house. You observe that the drawings are made upon very thin paper, so that the letter had the appearance, not only to the eye, but to the touch of containing money. Now I happen to know that this letter was mailed day before yesterday, and it must have been delivered from our post-office yesterday. Now if you will just examine that seal you will discover that it has been broken, and sealed up again."

"Yes, father, I can see. But may that not have been done by the man who sent it? Perhaps he forgot to put in the plans, and had to break the seal to rectify his mistake."

I shook my head. I had thought of that, and had rejected the conclusion.

"How do you know that the letter was mailed day before yesterday?" asked Eleanor.

"Because," I answered, "the man who wrote it happened, unexpectedly to himself, to be called to our town to-day, and I met him on my way home this evening. He spoke to me of his letter, and I told him that I had it with me, and when we came to compare notes touching the mailing of the letter and its delivery to me, we could only conclude that it had got mysteriously delayed on the way; but when I came just now to observe that the seal had been tampered with, the truth flashed upon me. Whoever broke that seal supposed there were bank-notes within; but, finding his mistake, he resealed the missive, and contrived to have it properly delivered at my counting-room, probably thinking that the discrepancy between the dates of posting and delivery might not be observed—and I certainly should not have observed it if I had not met the writer of it as I did."

"Who could have had access to your box at the post-office?" asked my daughter.

"I cannot tell," said I. "But Eustace Marland is my confidential clerk, and generally does all the business with the post-office."

"You do not suspect him!" cried Eleanor; and her look and tone plainly showed that she rejected any such idea with scorn.

Now I had had reason to believe that Eustace was learning to love my child, and that she was returning the sentiment; and I had not thought of opposing any barrier, for I had believed the young man to be all that a virtuous true-minded girl need desire for a husband.

"I suspect no one yet, my child. I shall make further examination."

She looked into my face a moment, and then arose and laid her hand upon my shoulder.

"Father," she said, very slowly, "I know you think it possible that Eustace Marland may be dishonest. You will

make further examination, but you must make it so secretly that your suspicions shall not become known to any of your clerks until you let me know the result. Will you promise me this?"

I gave her the promise, and we then turned our attention to other subjects.

My suspicions once aroused, of course I did not fail to keep a close watch upon the money matters of my agency; and ere many days a letter was missing—a letter which had been posted at Buffington for me, and which contained a hundred dollars. I had previously called the attention of one of the post-office clerks to my letters, requesting him, if convenient, to keep a more careful eye than usual upon my mail matter; and when I applied to this clerk he distinctly remembered that the letter from Buffington had been received at our office; and the fact was particularly impressed upon his mind by the circumstance that he had himself, on the very same day, received a letter from a friend residing in the same town.

So much was gained. The letter containing the money had arrived at our post-office, and had been deposited in my box. Now who could have taken it?

Let it be here understood that I had a box at the post-office, into which all my letters and papers were put, and which could be opened upon the outside. The lock I had furnished myself, selecting one the keys of which would not be very apt to be duplicated. There were two keys, one of which I kept, the other being in charge of Eustace Marland.

As matters had thus far turned, I could not help suspecting Eustace; or, at least, my suspicions lay in that direction; and we all know how natural it is, when the thoughts are once thus bent, for us to take particular note of things which never before attracted our attention; and, furthermore, things which, under ordinary circumstances, would be thought of no weight, now grow into proofs and confirmations strong enough. So I watched my confidential clerk very narrowly, and it was not long before I discovered that he had something more upon his mind than my business; and once, when he entered the counting-room in a sort of abstracted mood, he started and turned pale, and trembled and stammered when I asked him rather abruptly what was the matter. I did not press the subject, but from that time I had little doubt of his guilt.

Of course he was guilty, else why

should he so plainly show his knowledge of guilt by so often paling and trembling in my presence? But I would, if possible, obtain one more item of evidence before I accused him openly. I knew that he had been in the habit of depositing small sums in the Savings Bank, and I thought I would go and see if he had lately had any unusual amounts placed to his credit. The cashier was free, and willingly exhibited his books. Only about one week before, Eustace Marland had deposited two hundred and fifty dollars!—deposited it in his own name!

I had no more doubt. Still I thought I would look a little further back. Ah! one month before that he had deposited one hundred dollars! One month earlier still, seventy-five dollars!

I had no heart to look further. I knew that from the salary which I paid him he could have laid by no such sums—no, nor a tenth part thereof—for he not only had his own expenses to pay, but I knew that he was voluntarily bearing the expense of the education of his only sister. I reflected a long time upon the matter, and finally resolved that I would not bring the youth to a public trial, for I believed that he had a naturally good heart, and the money which he had thus wickedly taken might have been—probably had been—expended for a good purpose. I would simply let him know that I had discovered his guilt and discharge him.

I felt badly for him, but I felt worse for my daughter, for I had now discovered how fondly she loved him.

"Eleanor," I said, winding my arm about her waist, and drawing her upon my knee, "you must not grieve too much. Courage, my darling, and be a brave, true girl. EUSTACE MARLAND IS GUILTY!"

I thought at first she would not survive it, so terrible was the shock; but she recovered, and finally spoke.

"Has he confessed it?"

"No."

"Have you accused him?"

"No."

"What are the proofs?"

I told her the story—told it carefully—omitting not the slightest thing. When I had done she rose to her feet and stood before me. Her countenance seemed illumined by a holy fire, and the light of the Spirit beamed from her eyes.

"My father, he is not guilty! I feel it as I feel that my own sainted mother was pure. Now will you allow me to speak with him first? Will you leave

the matter in my hands for four-and-twenty hours?"

I had no faith in her success, but I could not refuse her request.

On the following morning business called me out of town, and when I returned in the evening I found Eleanor waiting for me in the library. Her face was bright like the brow of morning, giving promise of a brighter day.

I asked her what she had learned.

She had learned, she said, that Eustace was innocent; that he was noble and true; and that it would have killed him if such a horrible crime had been spread abroad in connexion with his name.

How did she know all this?

Eustace had told her.

But what explanation had he made of the money he had deposited in the Savings Bank?

My child's answer was earnest and simple, as though she had been quoting from the writings of the Apostle Paul.

"Oh, he cannot tell me now where he got that money, but he will tell me by-and-bye. He came honestly by it, and he did not earn it in hours that belonged to you, nor has he in any way or manner been using to his own benefit beyond the salary you pay him, the influence of his position with you."

My heart sank. The momentary hope was gone. Alas! how trusting and simple she was, poor child!

"And now, father, he says we must find the criminal. It is as much for his interest as for yours. He had supposed that the trouble had been in the mails; but if there is in your employ a dishonest man, we will find him. Will you let us try?"

At that moment I could not find it in my heart to put my foot upon the sweet blossom of hope that thus gave promise to my child. Was it possible that Eustace could be innocent? At least it was not impossible.

"Does Eustace suspect any one?" I asked.

"Perhaps I ought not to tell that."

"And am I to trust you without being admitted into your confidence?"

"Oh, no, father; but then Eustace does not suspect any one yet. The crime is too great to be cast upon any man without some show of proof. But he has told me that if any man in your employ has done that thing, it must be Albert Lascombe."

"Albert Lascombe!" I repeated.

"Why, he is one of the most quiet and industrious clerks I have."

"So he appeared to you, father. But just think how dark and low-browed he is, and how he looks out of the corners of his eyes; and then you know he hates Eustace."

"I'm sure I know no such thing. Why should he hate Eustace Marland?"

"Do you not know that I was forced to treat him almost uncivilly in order to free myself from attentions that were becoming painful to me?"

Yes, I did remember something about it. And, come now to think of Lascombe more particularly in this connexion, he did seem to wear a dark, secretive look, like one who could commit a crime and keep it to himself. I was beginning to waver; and with an inward prayer that success might crown their efforts, I told my child that she and Eustace might try the experiment of detecting the thief; and I furthermore promised that I would render any assistance that lay in my power.

On the next morning, when I entered my counting-room, I met Eustace Marland. He quietly closed the door, and then stood before me.

"Mr. Southmead," he said, with but slight tremor in his voice, "I know all that you have discovered, and all that you have suspected. Will you allow the matter to rest as it is between us, until I have made an effort to discover the sinner? And will you trust me as you have done heretofore?"

I hesitated.

"I promise," he added, "that should I fail to discover who has done the wrong, I will at least make all clear that you now hold as dark against me."

"Then, my boy," I cried, taking his hand, "I trust you. Now go at your work, and claim my assistance when you need it."

I felt better after this, though I did not feel entirely satisfied. The sums of money Eustace had deposited troubled me. If he had not stolen them from my letters he might have been dabbling in lottery tickets, or something of that kind. However, I did my best to hope that all might come out right.

Two days after that Eustace told me that he might have occasion to leave the store during the day, and that if I could spare him he should like to be absent until two or three o'clock in the afternoon. I asked him who would get the

noon mail. He said he would get it when he came back, unless I chose to send some one else for it. I told him it would be all right.

This conversation occurred outside of the counting-room, in the hearing of the other clerks, at an early hour in the day.

That evening Eleanor asked me if I had received a letter during the day from Otterville. I told her I had seen none such, and asked what she meant, whereupon she informed me that Eustace had in a disguised hand, written to me a letter, and that on the previous day she had sent it by one of her own friends who was going direct by rail to Otterville, to have it mailed at the office of that town.

"My friend returned this afternoon," continued she, "and has informed me that she put the letter in the office at Otterville yesterday. We put into the letter some samples of very thin, soft envelope paper, so that whoever should get hold of it might think there was money in it. Did not Eustace leave the store this noon?"

"Yes," I told her.

"And Albert Lascombe had an opportunity to visit the post-office before the mail matter had been obtained?"

"Yes."

"Then he has fallen into the trap."

"But how can that be? If he has taken that worthless letter, he will simply destroy it."

"Or return it," suggested Eleanor, "as he did the one from the architect."

"Well—and how shall we be the wiser?"

"You shall see," she said. "Only," she added very seriously, "when you find upon your desk a letter bearing the Otterville post-mark upon it, you must be sure and not open it until you reach home. Will you promise me that?"

I promised, and the witch released me.

On the afternoon of the next day Eustace was purposely late at the post-office again, and he took care that the clerks should know that he would be so. When he finally came in with the letters, I was alone in the counting-room, and before laying his budget down he selected one, and called my attention to it.

"This should have been received yesterday," he said, "and I have no doubt that it was received in our office at that time. Will you have the kindness to show it to your daughter before you break the seal? She will explain the rest."

As I cared not to attract the attention

of others, I promised to do as Eustace requested without asking further questions. As soon as I reached home Eleanor asked the question with her eyes, and she must have read the answer in my returning glance, for she turned away about her work and said no more until we were alone in the library. Then she asked—

"Have you the letter?"

I produced it, and gave it to her.

"You have not touched the seal," she said.

I told her I had not.

"Don't it feel like a letter full of money, father?"

I acknowledged that it did.

"And how easily the bad man was led on to expose himself," she continued.

"See how fast and firmly this envelope is now sealed. Do you observe? I sealed it in the first place myself, and I was careful to leave it so that it could be very easily opened without tearing the paper, by any one who had the least experience in such matters. Now, father, I will tell you what I know: I know that this letter has been opened and sealed up again since it was deposited in the office at Otterville. I know this letter reached our office, and was put into our box, yesterday. And I furthermore know that it must have been abstracted from your box by some unauthorised person, and afterwards restored."

"But why should it have been restored?" I asked, wonderingly.

"Break the seal, and read."

I did so. There was a letter, and within its folds were half a dozen samples of very fine envelope paper, and the writer wished to know if I had room in my business for the sale of such paper, providing that I could have it so that a good margin might be left for profit. The letter concluded with the following paragraph:—

"And now to another matter. I am in want of a good agent—one in whom I can trust implicitly, and who has a good business capacity. A young man in your employ, named Albert Lascombe, has been recommended to me. If he comes to me, his work would be rather confidential than laborious, and his salary should be ample—at least far more than you are paying him. Is he honest and trustworthy, and are you willing to spare him? The fact that you keep him in your employ would seem to answer the first question, and unless I hear from you within a week, I shall conclude that you answer the

second question in the negative, and shall consequently turn my attention in another direction. Trusting, however, that you may conclude to spare Mr. Lascombe,

"I remain, yours most truly,

"SILAS G. BURROUGHS."

"Do you see through it now?" asked my daughter.

"Is there any such man in Otterville as Silas G. Burroughs?" I returned.

"No," she said; "I was very particular to make inquiries before Eustace wrote that letter."

Of course I saw it all very plainly, and I saw, too, that Albert Lascombe would be sure to expose himself if he had really broken that seal. It was a very adroit trap, and it only remained to see if the game would be caught.

Two days after that I noticed that Lascombe was nervous and uneasy. He showed his unrest so palpably, that even a stranger to all the circumstances could not have failed to notice it. On the morning of the third day he came into the counting-room as soon as he saw me alone.

"Good morning, Mr. Lascombe," said I.

He returned the salutation in a bungling way, and then went on—

"Mr. Southmead, I received a letter last evening from a friend of mine residing in Otterville, and among other things he spoke of a Mr. Burroughs who was wishing to hire an agent. He said Mr. Burroughs told him that he was going to write to you to see if you could spare me. I thought I would like to inquire, sir, if you had heard from the gentleman."

I asked Lascombe if he remembered the whole name.

"It was Silas G. Burroughs, I think," he replied.

"Have you your friend's letter with you?"

He had it not. He said he had left it at his boarding-place, and I did not think it worth while to send him after it. I closed the door of my office, and then looked my clerk full in the face.

"Albert Lascombe," I said, sternly and solemnly, "there is no such man in Otterville as the man you have named! A letter purporting to be from Silas G. Burroughs was mailed at Otterville for me; but it was written here, and was a pure invention from first to last. In one sense I am glad, and in another sense I am sorry that it has accomplished its purpose. Mr. Lascombe, you have purloined

letters from my box at the post-office, and you have robbed me of money!—Stop! Do not interrupt me—do not add perjury to the crime! I know what I say. The proof is in my hands. Yet, sir, I would not bring you to further punishment. For the sake of the memory of your father, who was my friend, I will not expose you. Confess to me your guilt, and restore what you can of the stolen money, and I will let you go, hoping and praying that in some other section you may seek and obtain an honest livelihood."

A few moments he struggled with himself, and then he broke down. He was not hardened in guilt, and he knew not how much other evidence I had against him. He confessed it all—confessed to the taking of over four hundred dollars at different times, most of which he had laid up. He had a false key to my letter-box, and had watched favourable opportunities for examining the contents thereof.

But the thought of Albert Lascombe is not pleasant. He restored me about three hundred dollars, and then left for the West, where I trust he is doing better. I will simply add, in this connexion, that as I know he changed his name when he left his home, this publication cannot affect him.

Eustace Marland came to me when all this had been done, and when his entire freedom from guilt was no longer a question, and told me that he had a secret to confide to me. He was not willing that there should be even room for a surmise in my mind touching the events of the suspicions I had held. And then he showed to me some letters which he had from time to time received from a New York publisher, the contents of which he had kept to himself more from modesty than from any other cause. Judge of my surprise when I found that Eustace Marland, writing under a *nom de plume*, was the author over whose productions even I had beguiled many a weary hour.

So now I knew where the money had come from, and I also knew why I had sometimes seen him apparently weary and abstracted in the morning, when he should have been fresh and strong.

I need not prolong the story. If I was happy and glad when I knew all this, what must have been the happiness of my dear child. But the crowning joy was yet to come; and when at the proper time Eustace and Eleanor united their petitions for a more perfect union, I did not say them nay.

BEAU BRUMMELL.*

It is a solemn truth that every death-bed is the final scene of a great tragedy, though the death be a beggar's, the bed one of straw. Yet to the human imagination the supreme catastrophe is magnified in its impressive terror when the miserable death strikingly contrasts with the glittering life, as, for example, in the instance of his splendid Grace of Buckingham, who expired

"In the worst inn's worst bed,
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red;"

and—a modern illustration—the tinsel life of Beau Brummell fading into the darkness of death in the hospital of the Good Saviour, Caen, France.

The perverted, lost life of the famous Beau Brummell dates from the 7th June, 1778. He was one of three children—two boys and a girl. The father of George Bryan Brummell was secretary to Lord North, of disastrous memory. The noble lord's administration, however unfortunate for his country, was greatly beneficial to Brummell senior, who was able, by wise thriftiness, to save upwards of sixty thousand pounds, which, at his death, when the future Beau was but sixteen years of age, was bequeathed in equal portions to his children.

Beau Brummell received a fair education, and was a student at Eton when his father died. He exhibited, very early, much cunning perception, and seems to have foreseen the Georgian Era which was soon to dawn, when taste in tailoring would be a more potent introduction to "high society" than fame in arts, arms, or learning. He was, besides, well fitted by nature to be a distinguished clothes-peg. His face was not so handsome as the late Count d'Orsay's; but his elegant figure would show off a tailor's skill as well as could that doubtful nobleman, or Prince Florizel—Mr. Thackeray's Prince Florizel—afterwards George IV. George Brummell had one virtue in perfection—that of cleanliness in person and apparel. Lord Byron, who knew him well, has said, with respect to his dress, that it was only remarkable for its exquisite propriety. The noble lord himself belonged to the

now happily obsolete class of "Dandies." Young Brummell's general character whilst at Eton was that of "a clever idle boy." He had some humour, too—good-natured humour. One trifling anecdote is sufficient proof of this: A bargee having in some way offended the Eton students, was seized by a number of the exasperated lads, and was about being hurled from the bridge over the Thames into the river, when George Brummell interposed in perhaps the only manner that, during the excitement of the moment, would have been successful. "My good fellows," he exclaimed, "don't; the man is in a high state of perspiration, and would be sure to catch cold." The droll way in which this was said tickled the boys. They burst into laughter, and the alarmed bargee was set at liberty with a solemn warning not to offend again.

From Eton George Bryan Brummell went to Oxford, and was entered at Oriel College. Previous, however, to leaving Eton, he had attracted, by the "exquisite propriety" of his dress, the favourable notice of the Prince of Wales, who had seen him on the terrace at Windsor. That favourable notice, which the young man plumed himself upon as about the highest honour that could be conferred upon a human being, was unquestionably the great calamity of his life—the unbarring of a door which led by a primrose path for a considerable distance, presently with abundance of nettles and thorns towards the end, whence there was no turning back, to the abyss of shame and ruin.

At Eton young Brummell was smitten with the exceeding loveliness of a youthful damsel, the niece of Colonel Brewster, a retired officer in the service of the East India Company. The young lady had perhaps not been strictly educated, her uncle, by whom she was adopted as a daughter, not having long returned from India. George Brummell would appear to have been so much in love as such an incarnation of vanity and conceit could be; but was suddenly disenchanted. "How is it that you are never seen now with Colonel Brewster's niece?" asked one of his companions. "Don't speak of it, there's a good fellow," rejoined young Brummell, with a shudder; "she asked for soup twice."

At Oriel George Brummell was remarkable chiefly for breaking the College rules,

* We are indebted for this interesting sketch to a volume of invaluable research, entitled "Eccentric Personages." A new and cheap edition of this work has just been published by Messrs. Maxwell & Co., 122, Fleet Street.

and assiduous tuft-hunting. He was a devout believer in the doctrine enforced by Mr. Thackeray in one of his lectures at the Marylebone Institute—"Cultivate the society of your betters, young men." By betters, meaning persons of the highest reachable sociable position, possessed of present wealth and distinction, and in some cases glorified by the gleam of stars and garters shining in the distance. He entered himself as a competitor for the Newdegate Prize, and, though diligently "coached," was unsuccessful—not a result to be surprised at.

His failure was more than compensated by the gift of a cornetcy in the Tenth Hussars, then commanded by the Prince of Wales, who had so admired the eccentric exquisite on the terrace at Windsor. The notion of making George Brummell a soldier! He rode pretty well, yet but for one fortunate circumstance never had recognised his company when the regiment was paraded. One of the non-commissioned officers had a remarkably large blue nose—red and blue, more correctly—and of very brilliant tints. That nose was Brummell's beacon. "My good fellow," said he, offering the man a handful of silver; "my good fellow, take care to keep up that illumination, it's worth the cornetcy to me."

His inefficiency as a soldier did not, however, prevent his rapid advancement. He was gazetted captain on the 1st of June, 1796, through favour of Prince Florizel, with whom he continued to be a great favourite. He was also the "Soul of the Mess"—a very earthly, mundane soul, the coarse quality of which no coating of varnish could conceal from moderately discerning eyes. Still the *protégé* of a prince, and that prince the colonel of the regiment, would necessarily be a pet of the dandy officers of the aristocratic Tenth, especially as Brummell claimed to be the direct descendant of a line of illustrious ancestry, dating from the Conquest. The endorsement of Prince Florizel sufficed to make current this claim to an illustrious, as distinguished, I suppose, from a noble descent.

The remark attrituted, I fancy wrongly, to the Chancellor Oxenstiern, of Sweden, who, alluding to some flagrant instances in question, exclaimed, "See with what little wisdom the world is governed," might, with perfect appositeness, be paraphrased into, "See with what slender wit the world of fashion may, under cer-

tain circumstances, be amused, delighted, entranced. Before what a poor humanity all that glittering, pretentious throng will bow down in wondering admiration."

The very best witticisms recorded as the utterances of George Brummell, in his time "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," and with which he set the mess table of the gallant Tenth in a roar, were sorry stuff. He had a slight cold, and being asked how he caught it, said, "I went to Pietri's Hotel, and was shown into a room where there was a damp stranger." This sadly convulsed the officers of the Tenth. Again—this was after he obtained his captaincy—"Why, Captain Brummell, you surely are not off with charming Lady M——." "An ounce of civet, good apothecary," replied the incipient beau, who had probably read elegant extracts from Shakspeare; "an ounce of civet, good apothecary—I positively saw her eating cabbage!" "But surely you, Captain Brummell, sometimes eat vegetables?" said a gruff old major. "Yes, yes, major, yes; I once eat a pea."

Having attained his majority, and come into possession of his inheritance, 30,000*l.* or thereabouts, the principal having augmented during his minority, and there moreover being ugly rumours afloat that even the Tenth Hussars might be ordered upon foreign service, George Brummell, who had a constitutional objection to expose himself to the action of that villainous saltpetre which ought never to have been digged out of the bowels of the harmless earth, sold his commission and retired from the service.

George Brummell at once determined to cultivate "a life of pleasure"—Sybarite, epicurean pleasure; therein being as one with his patron the Prince of Wales. That flowery path to ruin was gaily trod. Mr. Brummell took a house in Chesterfield-street, furnished it in exquisite style, and forthwith devoted himself to the cultivation of society in "high life," and the best mode of tying white neckerchiefs. He succeeded in both those grand objects of ambition to his heart's content. "I can stand," he boasted, "in the pit at the opera, and beckon to Lovain (Duke of Argyll) on one side, and to Villiers (Lord Jersey) on the other, and see them come to me." Fortunate Brummagem Beau Brummell! But the tie and set of the white neckerchief was his America of discovery. The how and the why disturbed the peace and exercised the inge-

nuity of the whole fashionable world. Vainly was he importuned to disclose the wonderful secret. The oracle remained persistently dumb. Not even to the prince would he shed a ray of light upon that sacred mystery. It was only when hurriedly leaving England to avoid a debtor's prison, that he vouchsafed to enlighten "high life" through the medium of his friend Lord Albanley. "Starch is your man," he wrote with a pencil, directing the scrawl to that nobleman. The Lord Albanley was delighted, and gave in after-years substantial proofs of his gratitude for so signal a favour. The *beau monde* participated in the enthusiasm of Albanley at the solution of the grand secret. Such were your gods, O Israel! And these Brummells, peers, princes, were contemporaries with the men who wrestled down the giant wars which for a quarter of a century had convulsed Europe!

That Beau Brummell was the rage amongst the upper ten thousand is indisputable. No dinner, no ball, no assembly was held to be complete if he were absent. Very careful was he to preserve his exclusiveness. He recognised the peerage, but no other class of society, and like another Regency George IV. impostor, John Wilson Croker, affected to be ignorant that there was such a locality as Russell-square "within the confines of civilization."

Once, when remonstrated with by the wealthy father of a young man whom he, Brummell, had helped to "pluck" at cards, he said, "Upon my honour, sir, I did much for your son. I once gave him my arm all the way from White's to Walters'. Think of that, sir!"

Brummell, as I have said, had some humour of a weak eau-de-cologne kind. He condescended to accept an invitation to dine with a rich young man whose acquaintance he had made in a gaming-house. The young gentleman called upon him about half-an-hour before the time that dinner would be served to remind the Beau of his promise. In the meantime Brummell had received an invitation from Lady Jersey, and just as the rich nobody was speaking with Brummell, her ladyship's carriage stopped at the door to convey the distinguished dandy to her residence.

"Well," said the plebeian acquaintance, "I see you will not honour me with your company to dinner this evening. Lady Jersey's claim is of course para-

mount. As my house lies in the direction of her ladyship's, I will ride with you part of the way."

"Good God!" exclaimed Brummell, "ride with me! But perhaps you mean to get up *behind*."

By-the-bye, one of the Beau's notions was that a sedan-chair "was the only vehicle for a gentleman."

One Mr. Snodgrass, a F.R.S., and grave philosopher, happened to attract the notice of Brummell. The name offended the Beau, and he would ring the bell and knock at the door about midnight, when there was no one up but the philosophic student himself. The window of the venerable man's study was thrown open, the venerable head thrust forth, and an angry demand screamed forth in pantaloon treble to know the meaning of such knocking and ringing at that dead waste and middle of the night.

"Is your name Snodgrass?" asked the mellifluous, bland voice of Brummell—"is your name Snodgrass?"

"Yes, it is—what then?"

"Only, my dear fellow, that it is an extremely vulgar name. Snodgrass is decidedly vulgar."

"You be ——!"—we need not print the participle past—was the reply as the window was slammed down.

The torment was fitfully repeated, till at last Mr. Snodgrass found himself obliged to appeal to the authorities, and Beau Brummell received an emphatic warning that such conduct would incur ignominious punishment. The Beau kissed the rod, and no more disturbed the philosopher's peace.

This incident suggested the once popular farce of *Monsieur Tonson*.

Once Brummell was induced to accept an invitation to dine from a wealthy alderman, having first, however, obtained the civic dignitary's promise "not to tell." The dinner was served, and Brummell, who had made himself waited for a considerable time, at last arrived. There was a baron of beef on the table.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, glancing at the table—"Good heavens—Ox!" and vanished.

The familiar terms upon which he stood with the so-called great men of the realm will be sufficiently illustrated by one or two anecdotes.

He was walking with the Duke of Bedford, along Pall Mall, when his grace asked him if he liked the cut of his coat—an improvisation of the duke's tailor.

Beau Brummell examined critically the ducal coat, and the survey finished, said, with an air and accent of deep compassion—

"My dear Bedford, *do* you call this thing a coat?"

Again, being on a visit at Belvoir Castle, the seat of the Duke of Rutland, where a numerous company was assembled, and feeling somewhat indisposed he left at an early hour, for him. Suddenly sounding a powerful alarm, or fire-bell, which at once arrested the flying feet of the dancers—

"I beg your pardon, ladies and gentlemen," said the Beau, from the gallery which overlooked the *salon de danse*; "I beg your pardon, ladies and gentlemen, but there is no hot water in my room."

One incident in the eccentric life of this gay, glittering human moth should be mentioned before I follow him into exile, and show what this "observed of all observers" was when the paint and plumes were stripped off. If not a vain boast, which is most likely, it speaks, in perhaps a dubious sense, to his credit. The Beau was on a visit to Earl H——. It was understood that his stay would be a long one. Three or four days only had passed when Brummell, brusquely presenting himself, said to his lordship, "My lord, I must leave at once. I cannot stop here." "Why, in Heaven's name?" "I am in love with her ladyship, your wife." "The devil you are! But never mind that. A passing fancy. Nothing more. Her ladyship is not in love with *you*." "Well, your lordship, I am afraid her ladyship does incline to be in love with me." Brummell left immediately.

Alderman Coombe, an extensive brewer—Beau Brummell will be most faithfully depicted by these stray anecdotes—Alderman Coombe, an extensive brewer, had lost a considerable sum of money to the Beau, who, with hilarious impudence said, whilst pocketing his winnings, "All right, Alderman Coombe; in future I shall never drink any porter but yours." "I wish," retorted the angry alderman, "that every other scoundrel in London would say the same, and keep his word." In this passage of arms between the Beau and the Brewer, the latter had certainly the best of it.

At last all was gone: the pet of high society, the inventor of unapproachable neckties, was cleaned out. He must make himself scarce as quickly as might

be; but in order to pass over the strait which divides Dover from Calais funds were required. There were half a dozen executions in his house, and no money could consequently be obtained by sale or by hypothecating or pawning of furniture, plate, &c. In this extremity, George Bryan Brummell sent a note to one of his friends, a Mr. Scrope Davis. I subjoin the note and the reply:—

"May 16, 1816.

"MY DEAR SCROPE,—Lend me two hundred pounds. The banks are shut, and all my money is in the Three per Cents. It shall be repaid to-morrow morning.—Yours, G. B."

Mr. Scrope Davis to G. B.

"MY DEAR GEORGE,—It is very unfortunate, but all my funds are in the Three per Cents.—Yours truly,

SCROPE DAVIS."

Brummell must have been more successful in other quarters, as he certainly raised funds enough to enable him to reach Calais, and support himself there till he could organize a method of levying black-mail on his titled English friends, upon whose charitable alms Beau Brummell, the star of fashion, was thenceforth content to exist.

The habits of this eccentric gentleman clung to him through life. He was as preposterously exclusive when a fugitive from his creditors, and living upon the charity of his former acquaintances, as in the days of his ephemeral prosperity. He took up his quarters at a Calais hotel, where he lived in very comfortable style for seventeen years. His correspondence and the occasional visits of great people imposed upon the French tradesmen, who believed that he was suffering under a temporary eclipse only, and would again shine out resplendently, a bright particular star in the aristocratic galaxy of England. The French are an acute people, but they have strange notions with regard to England and English society. For example, they believe the Lord Mayor of London to be a potentate second only in dignity and power to the monarch of Great Britain.

It is not at all surprising that they should have believed in Beau Brummell. The Duchess of York, a very amiable lady, sent him not only money, but a table-cover worked with her own hands. This steadfast friendship of her Royal Highness seems to show that after all the

vain coxcomb must have had something good in him. Lord Sefton moreover paid him a visit; so did Wellesley Pole and Prince Puckler Muskau, the Prussian nobleman who once made a small splutter in the literary line.

Let us pass swiftly over the decline and fall of this once celebrated gentleman. His debts in Calais rapidly accumulated. His English friends, generous as many of them were, could not supply his extravagancies; and when George IV. passed through Calais on a visit to Hanover, and did not send for *ce célèbre* Brummell, the faith of the French in the great man sank to zero as quickly as did that of Justice Shallow in Sir John Falstaff, when Henry V. (in the play) publicly rebuked and cast him off. Brummell was refused credit, and a prison was not obscurely hinted at. Driven to desperation, he applied to the Duke of York to procure for him, through his influence with the Ministry, a Government appointment. The application was successful, and on the 10th of September, 1830, Beau Brummell was appointed English Consul at Caen, at a salary of four hundred pounds per annum.

Landed at last, one would think, safe out of Fortune's reach. Not at all. His debts followed; his foolish habits clung to him to the last, till at length the only person whom he could rely upon to befriend him was Mr. Armstrong, a grocer established in Caen. "My dear Armstrong," he wrote, one day, "lend me seventy francs to pay my washerwoman." Yet the man who wrote that note would not "honour" with his presence any assemblage at which people in the remotest degree connected with commerce were to be met with!

Beau Brummell had been Consul but about two years when he appears to have been smitten with positive lunacy. He memorialized Lord Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary, to the effect that there was no necessity for a British Consul at Caen. He appears to have imagined that if he gave up the Caen

Consulship he would certainly obtain a more lucrative one—in sunny Italy, he hoped. Lord Palmerston took the unfortunate Beau at his word—abolished the Caen Consulship, presented Mr. George Bryan Brummell with a *solatium* of two hundred pounds, but gave no hint of the recipient obtaining any other appointment. This was the climax. No sooner were the arms of England taken down from the front of his house than his French creditors determined at once to arrest his no longer inviolable person. This was done with a great deal of unnecessary display and circumstance; and poor Brummell was carried off to jail. A very weak creature the pet of courtly circles proved, when subjected to the pressure of misfortune. He could do nothing to help himself; continued to weep and wail, and pour forth bitter complaints that his dinner was not regularly served—that his washerwoman did not get up his white cravats so well as she had formerly! At last, the grocer, Armstrong, who appears to have been actuated by a real sympathy for the broken-down Beau, proposed that he himself should go to England and personally solicit—being, of course, furnished with proper credentials—the help of Mr. Brummell's rich friends. This was done. Armstrong's mission was so far successful that sufficient funds were obtained to release Brummell from jail. But the Beau's future was black and dreary as ever. The intellect, such as it was, gave way; and it was determined by Mr. Armstrong and other friends to obtain him an asylum in the hospital of "Le Bon Sauveur." This charitable design was carried out; and George Bryan Brummell, screaming with idiotic terror, for he fancied he was about to be again shut up in jail, was conveyed to the convent or hospital. There he died, and was buried. The sad lesson which this life teaches needs no interpretation. He who runs may read its mournful significance.

REJECTED.

I.

"Is this your final answer, then, Georgia?"

The elegant creature in violet silk and misty lace opened wide her dazzling blue eyes, to gaze at the tall, handsome youth, who held both of her snow-drop hands in his with a tightening, painful pressure.

"My final answer? To be sure; how could you be so absurd as to dream of me ever being more than a friend, you foolish boy?"

And she laughed quietly—a mellow, running ripple of a laugh.

"And you will not be my wife?"

"Don't ask it again, Malcolm; pray don't, it seems so absurd. How could you expect it. I dare say you have not money enough to purchase a ring only half the value of this one that I wear on my finger. You see what finger it is on?"

And drawing one glove from her hand, she held up to his gaze a cluster of the rarest diamonds, gleaming on the engagement finger.

A terrible whiteness gathered all over Malcolm Reeves' face. He put up his hand to wipe away the great drops of sweat that started on his forehead, and then said, in a husky whisper—

"May God forgive you for leading me on to this, Georgina Mordaunt! You have made me love you, giving me every encouragement to believe I was loved in return. Georgina, was this just?"

She curled her scarlet lips scornfully.

"I am sorry for you, Malcolm. I never dreamed of you believing my child's play to be earnest. I supposed you knew Judge Johnston was my accepted suitor."

"Judge Johnston! Do you know his age, Georgia?"

"I believe I do. He is fifty-five!"

Malcolm bowed.

"And has one motherless daughter to put in your care, nearly as old as yourself."

She flushed under his scorn.

"I will train her for you. Shall I, Mr. Reeves?"

"If I have her at all, I would rather take her as she is, without the training."

She bit her lips.

"You are sarcastic, Mr. Reeves. If

you are as weary of this foolish talk as I am, you will lead me to Judge Johnston. He is standing near the music-room, talking with Mrs. Lowston."

Malcolm gave her his arm quietly.

As they passed from the conservatory to the crowded room, some one said near them—

"How can Georgia Mordaunt prefer Judge Johnston to such a handsome man as Malcolm Reeves?"

"Judge Johnston is worth half a million; Malcolm Reeves has nothing save his talents," was the answer.

"His talents are a wealth in themselves," said the first speaker.

"Ay, but Georgia Mordaunt must have gold if her heart is crushed by it."

Malcolm and Georgia moved on from the spot where they had for a moment been compelled to linger on account of the crowd. Each had heard every word that had been uttered, and when he left her in Judge Johnston's keeping he gave one glance in her face. It was strangely white and still, but the Mordaunt pride was over it all.

Malcolm Reeves went out in the cold December night. The full moon gleamed down on his gloomy face, as he strode along, with his heart lying still like a withered flower. Georgia Mordaunt had taught him his first bitter heart-lesson. He had been living on in an idle dream, wasting the precious hours of his life under the spell of her beauty, content only in her smile. Now he must work, must forget this past sweetness, that had ended in so bitter a way.

From that hour he became a man, carving his name in the golden letters of fame, holding hundreds and thousands under the spell of his rare eloquence.

And Georgia Mordaunt stood at the altar, with her rare beauty heightened by orange blossoms and white satin; and sold herself to Judge Johnston for the bright yellow gold that would prove the curse.

II.

"OH! how are you, Reeves? This is a pleasure I did not expect. When did you return from your trip around the world?"

The tall, elegant man, with the burn of

other climes on his handsome face, turned listlessly from against the velvet-draped pillar, where he had been leaning with folded arms, in Mrs. Gracie's dazzlingly-lighted parlours.

"I returned but yesterday. Glad to see you, Charley!"

"This is a splendid crowd here to-night. Isn't she a beauty, though?"

"Which one, may I ask?"

"Why, that dashy widow, Georgia Johnston. She is flirting behind her fan with that young Gruggs, in white velvet and diamonds. She is looking this way now. Oh! those eyes are enough to melt an iceberg!"

Malcolm Reeves raised his eyebrows quietly.

"I should judge she had your heart strung around her pretty throat—eh, Charley?"

Charley St. Clair flushed angrily.

"If I am not mistaken, yours, once upon a time, was under her pretty foot! do you deny it?"

"Certainly not; Georgia jilted me fairly five years ago. How long has she been a widow now?"

"Three years. Are you thinking of entering the field again?"

Malcolm laughed sarcastically.

"Georgia Johnston wont jilt me twice. Who is that talking with her now—that little fairy, in pink silk and moss-buds?"

"Her step-daughter, Mildred Johnston; this is her first winter out—pretty little creature, too; but in my eye she pales beside the widow."

Charley St. Clair moved on; a minute more, and Georgia Johnston stood with veiled eyes before Malcolm Reeves. Her hand had drooped, quivering, in his as they met, and a rosy flush had deepened in her velvety cheeks. The heart she had cast from her once was worth the winning now; she felt it in every nerve of her being; this wide-famed man, gifted so much above others, was taking her heart by storm; she would have knelt at his feet to have heard the words that once she had laughed to scorn.

Some one began a song—a clear, bird-like voice that echoed like a silver chime through the great rooms. Malcolm gave his arm to Georgia, and they moved on to the music-room. Mildred Johnston was the singer.

"Your daughter has an extraordinary fine voice, Mrs. Johnston," Malcolm said coolly.

She bit her red lips.

"Yes, her voice is good; I wish her disposition was."

Malcolm smiled under his black moustache.

"Introduce me, please," he said when she had finished singing.

Georgia did as requested, but there was a glitter like steel under the drooping white lids of her deep blue eyes.

The dances commenced. Charley St. Clair danced with Georgia as his partner. Malcolm and Mildred sat where they could watch the swaying mass. When the waltz began, he bent his head towards Mildred.

"May I have the pleasure?" he asked.

She arose beside him; awhile after and she was whirling through the rooms, encircled by Malcolm Reeves's arm, a rosy flush on her cheek, and her Spanish eyes veiled with their jetty lashes. She had a mass of black billowy hair gathered back from her broad, low forehead, and falling in curls at the back of her head. A glitter of white teeth under the two red lips, and dimples playing about her cheeks like spots of sunshine on crimson velvet. Unconsciously, Malcolm was looking down on the face gathered so near his shoulder, while Georgia Johnston watched him with that same lightning glitter in her eyes.

The rest of the evening he devoted to Georgia; it was his hands that fastened the costly furs about her throat, and led to the carriage; and when, before starting, she put her head out of the carriage window to speak to him, he bent so near that he felt the sweet flutter of her breath across his cheek, and he could have touched her with his lips.

"You will come to my house often, Mr. Reeves?"

"Undoubtedly I shall, Mrs. Johnston."

"And you will not cherish the old past against me, Malcolm?" came in a fainting whisper.

"I am not so cruel as you deem me, Mrs. Johnston."

She shot a quick glance up to his face; he was watching her quietly with his smouldering eyes, a half smile on his lips.

Georgia Johnston would have given every piece of ill-gotten wealth that she possessed to have looked in this man's heart and known what was there. Her very soul seemed one sea of passionate love for the man who five years ago had been spurned from her side.

Early the next morning Georgia, in a white Cashmere wrapper, lay idly on a silken couch in her elegant sitting-room, and Mildred sat before the open piano, her fingers straying over the keys, when the servant threw open the door and announced Malcolm Reeves. He entered with a smile, and rubbing his white hands together, apologized for his early call.

Georgia looked up in his face.

"Make no excuse, Malcolm; you know you are always welcome."

"Thank you; but I came to beg the pleasure of your company this afternoon for a sleigh-ride. Will you go, ladies? the sleighing is excellent."

Georgia complied gladly; but Mildred answered softly—

"I should like the ride, but I have another engagement. I thank you, though, very much."

She had not looked at him all the while; but when he arose to go, he stopped an instant beside her, and said, softly—

"I need not tell you I am sorry that you cannot accept my invitation; for I think you know I am disappointed, Mildred."

She glanced then up in his face; something in his great soul-lit eyes sent the hot blood to her face; she went almost rudely past him to her room, threw herself on the soft carpet, and cried as if her heart would break. What right had this man to try and make her love him when he was winning her mother all the while? Why could she not be brave and strong enough to crush this passion out of her heart? When she had moaned herself half sick, she knelt and prayed to the sweet Jesus that she had leaned on all her life—whose arm had supported her through all the storms of desolation that had risen about her so early.

When Malcolm and Georgia had driven merrily away, Mildred went quietly out to visit a sick friend. She found her much worse, almost dying, and stayed until the night settled down in gloomy shadows.

A storm had been gathering all the afternoon, and now it began to fall in thick drops of sleet and rain.

Mildred hurried with all possible speed, for she had a long walk before her, and the small umbrella she had purchased seemed no protection whatever. As she was passing through Broadway she came suddenly upon Malcolm Reeves. He was coming from one of the glittering stores, and his carriage stood at the door. He

stepped back to let her pass; then started suddenly forward.

"Mildred—is it possible—won't you stop a moment?"

She turned towards him.

"What is it, Mr. Reeves?"

"This is late for you to be out alone—and you are wet through, child; you will catch your death."

He drew her towards the carriage, lifted her in, and took a seat beside her. Awhile after the gas from a street-lamp streamed through the wet window over Mildred's tear-stained cheeks.

Malcolm turned towards her.

"Mildred, child, you are weeping; what have I done?"

She made him no answer, and he drew her face to his.

"I love you, Millie—your tears grieve me."

She started back, and he cried out with a sudden painful fear—

"Millie, don't kill me—I cannot lose you now. I have lived on the one sweet hope of winning you since I saw you two months ago."

"But my beautiful mamma, Mr. Reeves!"

He drew her near him and told her all. When he had finished, she nestled in his great arm, with her head lying against his heart.

"And you do love me, Millie? say it with your own sweet lips."

With head bowed he listened for the reply.

"Of all persons in the world you are the dearest to me. I love you, God only knows how much, Malcolm!"

He gathered her still closer, pressing his lips with passionate tenderness over her sweet young face.

"If I had lost you, Millie," he said, "death would have been a welcome visitor—life would have been a dark waste of years without you—my pearl—my bride."

The carriage stopped at the elegant Johnston mansion. Malcolm carried Millie up the dripping marble steps, then stooping to kiss her again, he whispered softly—

"Good night, my beloved; to-morrow I shall call on your pretty stepmother; till then be silent."

She watched him ride away, then entered, going quickly to her own room, where she could thank her Heavenly Father for the great joy He had seen fit to crown her life with.

III.

BACK and forth, through the elegant depth of her princely parlour, Georgia Johnston, with folded arms, was pacing, her velvet dress trailing the violet-strewn carpet, and of all the glorious pictures, from the hands of eminent artists, that hung in bold relief against the golden-tinted wall, not one was half so royally beautiful as this woman."

"Malcolm, my beloved," came from her scarlet-curved lips. "Oh, I never dreamed to love any being as I love you. Why is he so silent? Does he fear another refusal? Surely he should read me better than that. And yet—and yet, what is the mystery in his great eyes that makes my heart beat with dread forebodings. Surely you must love me—me on whose every smile and word a score of men hang. What is their love to his. I would walk with bare feet through fire to hear him call me 'Georgia, beloved wife!'"

"Malcolm Reeves," the ebony waiter announced.

She turned to him with glad eyes as he entered, and put both her hands in his, palms downward.

"I have been thinking of you, Malcolm."

He laughed quietly.

"You know the old adage, Mrs. Johnston."

She smiled too, and a moment after, when he bent downward to pick up a half-withered blossom from the carpet, she ran her jewelled fingers through his black mass of hair, pushing it back from his white forehead, and then said—

"I used to do that in the old days at Mordaunt Hall, Malcolm—have you forgot? I hope I am a better woman now."

"I trust you are, Mrs. Johnston," he said, gravely.

"Georgia Johnston had a passionate heart. The hot blood leaped in crimson waves to her face, in one wild yearning for his love. Her pride was forgotten. She knelt at his feet, and laid her velvety cheek on his hand.

"I love you, Malcolm—I love you!" she cried, with misty eyes.

He lifted her up with a saddened face. There was no triumph in his eyes. If he had been less good he might have rejoiced, but as it was he only felt grieved.

"You are forgetting yourself, Mrs. Johnston; be calm, and let us erase this one act from our memory. I am sorry

that you love me—grieved to the heart—for I can never—"

She put out her pleading, trembling hands; a white agony passed over her face.

"Don't say it, Malcolm—don't! I would rather you should strike me dead. If I sinned in refusing you, I was the sufferer as well as yourself, for I loved you then even as you loved me. Did you think that old man was the choice of my heart? No, no! 'twas his gold—the curse that will blight my life. Malcolm, you are but human; forgive the past, and love me as you did in the old days. If you knew how all the while I had longed for your tender arms to cling about me, as in the past, you could not stand so still and cold. Lay your lips on my brow in pity, if nothing more, my love—my life!"

He turned his face away; she was so beautiful in her tears—so superb.

Was the old love clinging with weak fingers to his heart-strings yet? Surely, if it was, he must have forgotten everything—honour, principle, and all—to have taken this woman in his arms and kissed the grieved, beautiful face.

But Malcolm Reeves' infatuation for that woman had died out years ago. A young face, less fair, perhaps, lay where hers had been. He had a love in his heart that would lie there for ever—a part of his being, woven into his soul, never to end in this world.

"Listen to me, Mrs. Johnston," he said, calmly. "Let me tell you how impossible this is. I do not want to be cruel with you, but I must speak plainly. I came here to-day to tell you that I have loved and won Mildred for my bride. I need not tell you how dear to me she is, for, feeling as you do, 'twould only pain you. I am sorry this has happened, and it will be better for us both to strive and forget it."

Like a broken lily she lay, the pinkish tint of her fair face dying out in the ashy hue of agony. She faintly murmured—

"Oh, God! oh, God!"

Surely the curse of choosing gold before love had come in blighting force upon this woman's lie.

Malcolm Reeves and Mildred are now husband and wife, happy and contented. Georgia Johnston, a disappointed woman, is a leader of *ton*, trying to forget the past in the dashing life she is leading.

Surely, as ye sow, so shall ye reap.

AULD YULE; OR, CHRISTMAS IN SCOTLAND.

IN our part of the country—a lowland county far north—we fix our Christmas according to the Old Style of computing time, viz., on the 6th of January, the English Twelfth-Day. The same day is observed in most of the rural districts of Scotland. In the large towns, it is becoming the fashion to observe Christmas on the 25th of December, as in England; but in the country that day is passed over without notice, except, perhaps, by the lairds and gentry, who, having “been south,” think it rather a fine thing to affect English customs. It is not, however, the disposition of the Scotch generally to prefer the customs of England, or of any other country, to those which have been endeared to them by the traditions of their own loved land; and, in spite of all attempts at innovation, Auld Yule still holds its ground bravely.

The Scotch reviewers, who boasted that the intellectual strength which they brought to the demolition of English bards was sustained simply upon oatmeal, confessed a truth which has a wider and deeper significance than they would, perhaps, have been willing to admit. Oats, which Johnson described with so much unworthy bitterness as “the food of horses in England and of men in Scotland,” really play a most important part in all that relates to the social habits and observances of the Scotch. Oatmeal may be said to pervade the social life of Scotland much in the same way that beef pervades that of England, or potatoes that of Ireland. Like beef, too, it comes in as the characteristic fare of Christmas. Oatmeal makes cakes, and bannocks, and brose, and porridge, all the year round; and when Yule comes in his mantle of snow, it makes sowans. With what lively anticipations of delight we used to look forward through weary weeks and weeks to the sowans-drinking on Auld Yule morning! Not that any of us were immoderately fond of sowans, any more than the southerners are of beef; but because the making and the drinking of the beverage at early morn was a grand “ploy,” to be followed next day by the assembling of the whole household to the Yule breakfast, and all the doings peculiar to the season. Well do I remember with what anxious solicitude we used to inquire of Eppy (Elsbet), the cook,

“Hoo the sowans were getting on?” This would be perhaps a week beforehand, when the sowans had just been steeped in the bowie, which, I may explain, is a cask with one of the ends knocked out. But perhaps I had better explain the sowans as well as the bowie. Well, sowans are made from the husks of the oats. A quantity of these husks, having a considerable portion of meal adhering to them, are placed in a cask with several gallons of water, and are there left for a week or so to ferment. When the liquor begins to froth and become sour, it is ready for use. It is then run off, and boiled until it assumes the consistence of gruel; when it is sweetened with sugar or treacle, and then drunk out of bowls, or bickers. There is another kind of sowans, which is made much thicker, and is eaten with milk, like porridge. The “drinking sowans,” however, is specially reserved for Yule morning. It is the custom for the cook to wake everybody in the house about four or five o’clock, and call them to drink sowans. All the young people dress, and assemble round the kitchen-fire, each with his bicker in hand waiting to be served. If there be any old or infirm persons in the house, basins of sowans are taken to them in their beds; for every one must taste sowans on Yule morning. It would be considered as much a reproach in Scotland for a person to pass his Yule without drinking sowans, as it is in England for any one not to have a plum-pudding on Christmas Day; and as people in England taste each other’s plum-puddings, so in Scotland neighbours exchange “tastes” of their sowans. There is a good deal of rivalry, too, among the sowans-makers; and some Eppy or Jessie will become the talk of the country-side on account of the superiority of her sowans.

In some parts of the Highlands it is the custom, after the sowans-bickers have been emptied, to rush away to a swing, in which the various members of the family are swung in turn, the youngest having the preference. As the person in the swing approaches the swinger, he calls out, *Ei mi tu chal* (“I’ll eat your kail”); to which the swinger replies, *Cha ni u mu chal* (“You shan’t eat my kail”). This sport passes away the time until daylight, when the players all rush

to the door to see what kind of weather Yule has brought. The proverb runs, "A green (or black) Yule makes a fat kirk-yard;" meaning, that mild weather at Christmas is not favourable to health. In the northern parts of Scotland, however, it is not often that the earth is seen without a thick robe of snow on Yule morning. I remember, on more than one occasion, going to the door on Yule morning to mark the signs of the weather, and finding the whole side of the house snowed up to the first-floor windows. On one memorable Yule morning, the snow-drift was so dense that we were obliged to use fire-shovels in cutting our way out. The low outhouses, where the cattle and horses were stabled, were completely hid in the huge mountain of drift; and it took the farming men nearly a whole day to dig a passage to the doors through which to carry the poor beasts their food.

In farmhouses, it is the custom on Yule morning for the master to entertain all his servants, together with the members of his own family, to what is termed in the vernacular a "tae brackfast," in contradistinction to the usual matutinal meal of porridge and milk. This meal is greatly enjoyed by the farming men and boys, to whom tea, wheaten bread, and dried haddocks are a rare treat. When the wheaten bread and the haddocks have been demolished, and the tea-pot has been drained of the last drop that can possibly lay any claim to the name of tea, there immediately begins a general reading of fortunes in the tea-grouts left in the cups. The lasses never fail to divine that strangers will arrive during the day; and Jessy the housemaid and Eppy the cook fall into fits of laughter as their fancy is struck by some configuration of tea-grouts resembling a certain Willie or Jamie towards whom they are not unwilling to own that they cherish feelings of a tender nature. The fortune-telling over, a scene occurs something not unlike that which ensued upon Romulus's entertainment to the Sabines; with this difference, that the Sabine lasses were not prepared for it, whereas the Scotch lasses always are. Every lad seizes a lass, and kisses her on the spot without licence of mistletoe; nor is any lad content with kissing one lass, but kisses them all round in succession, as fast as he can catch them and overcome their well-feigned resistance. As the morning advances, the lasses begin to be on the *qui vive* for the "beggars," the first sound of whose

voices singing their Yule song brings all the inmates scampering to the doors. The "beggars" who visit the farm-houses of Scotland on a Yule morning may be said to correspond to the English "waits," so far as they introduce themselves with songs and music. Here, however, the comparison ends. The Scotch Yule beggars do not seek alms on their own account. They are, in fact, respectable young men belonging to the farm-houses of the neighbourhood, who agree among themselves to go round the country with sacks slung over their shoulders to collect contributions of meal or money, if they can get it, for some "auld wife," whose scanty means are inadequate to the supply of her humble wants during the rigours of winter. The sons of well-to-do farmers do not think it beneath them to perform this charitable office, particularly as it affords them an opportunity of calling upon and kissing all the bonnie lasses of the neighbourhood. Fine strapping chieles are those beggars, and smartly dressed too; and Eppy, as she drops a handful of meal in their sacks, like the Saxon *lef-day*, is by no means unwilling to take a good honest kiss in reward of her charity. The song with which the beggars herald their approach is generally a description of the case of the auld wife whose cause they have come to plead. I have a recollection of hearing on a Yule morning something like the following:—

"Ye ken auld Tibbie Cruikshank,
That lives doon by the muir;
An honest cra-tur Tibbie is,
But lanesome, auld, and puir.

"Then let us beg for Tibbie
A puckle o' your meal,
Or maybe twa or three bawbees,
Or claes will dee as weel."

And then comes a refrain, which is peculiar to many of the northern districts of Scotland, but the meaning of which I have never been able to learn. It recites the various farm-houses which have been visited, and ends with

"And awa' by Soothin toon,"

thus:—

"We've been up by Muirymfauld,
To Seggyburn been doon,
And ower to the minister's hoose,
And awa' by Soothin toon."

I may state, however, that the word "toon," or "toun," is generally used to signify a farm-house and its buildings. Several sets of beggars will visit the house during the morning, and they all get

meal or bawbees, and kisses to boot; and they all sing, that in gathering meal for Auld Tibbie, or Lizzie, they have been up and down, and here and there,

“And awa’ by Soothin toon.”

In the country the sports peculiar to Yule are chiefly shooting at a target for prizes; cards (the popular game being “catch the ten”); and amongst the bairns, playing at teetotum for pins. Every Scotch farming-man possesses a gun, in which he takes as much pride as the Swiss mountaineer of a past age took in his bow. He is equally fond of showing his skill in its use at the shooting-matches on Auld-Yule day. The prizes on these occasions are variously a fat hen, a pig, or, maybe, a silver watch. The match is generally got up in behalf of some poor person, who takes this mode of raffling any little article of property which he may possess.

Dinner is not a feature of Christmas observances in Scotland in the country districts, nor, indeed, to any great extent in the towns. The dinner is better than usual; but there is no distinctive fare, such as roast beef and plum-pudding; and the decoration of houses with evergreens is wholly unknown. In England, we are indebted for these customs to the Church, which originally introduced them as part of the religious observances of the season. In Scotland, however, Christmas is not a festival of the Church. There is no special service, nor, indeed, any service at all, in the churches on Christmas Day; but there is an intimate connexion in the minds of the people between the season and the Great Event which it commemorates. Yule in Scotland, like Christmas in England, is a period sacred to good feeling and Christian brotherhood, to the social foregathering of families, and the exercise of bountiful charity. A. H.

THE INVISIBLE KNIGHT.

In a fair but fragile Palace
Dwells a Knight,
And his lance is always lowered,
Ready for the fight;
And the hostile spearmen rally
Far and wide, for warlike sally.
Softened are his reverend features,
As with love;
On his shield are wrought two hands clasped,
His crest it is a dove;
And his corslet shows indenture
Gained in many a dreadful venture.
Every day this champion striveth
In the list;
Sometimes he is thrown and vanquished:
Doth he still exist?
Yes! the wondrous Knight, ne’er dying,
Rises while new foes are hieing.
Oh, the faithful, firm endeavour
That he makes
To be equal to the keeping
Of the charge he takes!
Mark his mighty bosom heaving,
As his arm the strength is leaving!
But in combat when he conquers,
There is peace
In the Palace, which protecting
He may never cease.
Mystic is the sweetness given:
Noble Knight, thou cam’st of Heaven!

R. EDWYN MILLROY.

SENTENCED TO TRANSPORTATION.

CHAPTER I.

FRANK LANGLEY.

"HALF-PAST nine, and no mistake; I am very late, I fear;" said Frank Langley to himself, comparing his watch with the time of a neighbouring church clock, as he walked rapidly towards the office of Blount, Brothers, and Co., general merchants in the large commercial town of Westernport. "Half-past nine," he continued, "and old Blount will have been in the office long ago, and will be as mad as—hum—ha—I shall have to make some excuse, I suppose. Let me see. I rather think I have been at Poggles and Co.'s looking at those samples of damaged Ceylon coffees; no, by-the-bye, that won't do; for, now that I recollect, that job was specially entrusted to Puckthorpe yesterday; but I might say——"

Here he found himself at the door of Blount, Brothers, and Co.'s office; the sole surviving representative whereof, Mr. Walter Blount, was a gentleman of ferocious business habits, and peculiarly irascibly inclined towards any of his staff who might presume to be "late" in the morning—*i.e.*, to put in an appearance after he (Mr. B.) had done so. And this may partly explain the state of mind in which Mr. Frank Langley found himself on the morning in question; though it cannot excuse the dreadful falsehoods he was suggesting to himself, as we have seen, to account for his gross misbehaviour.

The fact is, that Master Frank had not only left undone those things which he ought to have done—*videlicet*, proper regard to his employer's interests and attention to hours of business—but he had done that thing which (in Mr. Blount's opinion, at any rate) he ought not to have done—*videlicet*, calling at that gentleman's private residence, having previously (the traitor!) watched him (Mr. Blount) well out of it, and dawdled away twenty minutes, or thereabouts, in asking Miss Eleanor Blount, his respected employer's niece and ward, if he should match her that Berlin wool at Floppy's, in Bedlam-street, or bring her that piece of music, that sweet thing, from somewhere else, or—*que je*—some confounded nonsense or other he talked, and it took him twenty minutes to talk it—so he was late at the

office, and felt just a little bit conscience-stricken as upon his arrival at the aforesaid "marble halls," young Proby, the custom-house clerk, in his rapid act of tearing downstairs, two steps at a time, holloa'd out, "I say, Langley, Governor wants you!" And sure enough upon his entrance, "Mr. Langley wanted in the private office!" from the old book-keeper, were the sounds that greeted his by no means too-delighted ear.

"Good morning, Mr. Langley, rather late this morning, eh, Frank! Well, well, you're tolerably punctual, generally, so never mind about that at present: I want to have a little conversation with you on private matters, quite in a friendly way, you understand."

"Oh certainly, sir," said Frank, not understanding in the least, and wondering what the deuce his respected, &c. was going to say next.

"You see, Frank," began Mr. Blount, not without some hesitation, "I think that your capital" (Frank had 5000*l.* invested with Blount, Brothers, and Co.) "might be turned to better account; we can only give you 5 per cent."

"I'm sure it couldn't be in better hands," murmured Frank.

"Ay, ay, that's all very well, but the question is for your advantage. Now, our business on the coast of Africa decidedly wants pushing, and there's the *Crawler* Captain Sternhold, nice man is Sternhold ('very,' murmured Frank) "first-rate opportunity for you to go out by—you see," continued the old gentleman, "that we want to be efficiently represented there, and——"

"I thought you considered Hopkins thoroughly efficient," put in Frank.

"Ay, yes, Hopkins, very good super-cargo, worthy man, but eccentric; has got, I hear, three or four black wives out there, which circumstance gives him an interest in the country, of course; yes, very worthy man, but hardly fit to represent our firm. Now, if you were to go out, Frank——"

"I am very willing to do anything to oblige you, sir," interrupted Frank, "only you must please to recollect that the last time the *Crawler* came home, Captain Sternhold had to ship about a dozen and a half of Kroomen to replace his people who had died on the coast; every man of

them, I believe, except the cook, and *he* was a nigger."

"True enough," blandly responded Mr. Blount; "but you must also recollect that he had been trading to the Brass and the Nun rivers, whereas on this trip he is bound for Old Calabar, and there the climate is mag—nif—icent!"

Here Mr. Blount waved his hands about, as if words were feeble to express the sanitary tendency of the zephyrs which wantoned over that favoured land.

"Ah, well, well, never mind," continued Mr. Blount, observing the blank look of consternation, which, do what he would, overspread Frank's countenance, "what do you say to the West Indies—Demerara, for instance? I am not at all satisfied with what I hear about Mr. Muggins of the Grosnez Plantation; far too familiar with the niggers, I understand; all got jolly together last Christmas, I hear, and managed to set the works on fire among them; and then condemn him!" (burst out the old gentleman in a fury) "he sends me in an item in his accounts for '127*l*. 10*s*. damage by rats.' I'll rat him. Now, Frank, my dear boy, if you would like to go there, you would be the very man. Your own master, you know, monarch of all you survey, as Juan Fernandez, or whatever the chap's name was, beautifully remarked; good salary, and a first-rate opportunity for investing your money—the Mayflower plantation, adjoining property, is for sale; swampy hole, I believe, but profitable; totally unfit for a white man's residence, I understand, but never mind that; you could live at Grosnez."

"If you'll allow me, sir," said Frank, rising in a great state of bewilderment, "I'll take a short time to think over the matter before I make up my mind."

"Do so, my dear boy," said the old sinner affectionately; "and, by-the-bye, Frank, I expect a young friend of mine from London, Mr. Spurkins—Lobb, Spurkins and Swape, you know, our old friends—very intimate friends—shouldn't wonder if we became more intimate still—business connexions and family connexions too, eh!—you understand?"

Frank didn't; but he could not help feeling peculiar disgust at the turn the conversation was taking.

"Fine young man, Spurkins, I believe," pursued the old gentleman, "and I wish you to show him some attention; give him a look at the river and the docks,

and—and the lions generally, you understand."

"Oh yes, sir," said Frank (I am sorry to say that at this juncture Frank was reflecting that the bottom of the river would be an eligible "lion" to exhibit to Mr. Spurkins). "And as he will be here to-night, you may call upon him to-morrow morning, (Castor's Hotel,) and do the polite thing; I have no time myself. He will dine with me to-morrow; you had better come too."

"Great pleasure," muttered Frank.

"And think about that little matter—the Demerara affair I mean; you'll be your own master for the next few days, and—and—good morning."

"Good morning," replied Frank, and lost no time in making himself very scarce, as his junior in the East India sale-room department (and who had consequently to work double tides), remarked with considerable emotion.

"Wants to get rid of me, that's quite clear," said our hero to himself in a most unchristian frame of mind; "and what for, I wonder; but I think I see—that Spurkins—con-found him!—family connexions, eh! but there you may find yourself mistaken, Master Blount; I'll go and see Highton and take his opinion on the matter."

Muttering these disjointed sentences to himself, he found himself at the door of Muncombe, Highton, and Co., great colonial brokers, a house doing what is termed a rattling business, and one of the pillars of strength of the large trading town of Westernport. Mr. Highton was in, a circumstance on which Frank had reason to congratulate himself; it being the former gentleman's practice to attend to business when he was not hunting, or shooting, or yachting, or playing at billiards, or otherwise disporting himself.

"Come in, Frank—how are you? What's the matter?" said Highton; the latter remark being attributable to the look of vexation and perplexity pretty plainly evident on Frank's visage. Down sat Frank, and out came the story of old Blount's extraordinary conversation; the outrageous proposition he had made to him (Frank) on the subject of self-expatriation; Frank's wrath and perplexity thereupon; his righteous indignation on the subject of the advent of Mr. Spurkins, whom (though he had never seen him) he delivered most emphatically to confusion and condemnation—in which sentence he finally included the West Indies, the

Coast of Africa, Captain Sternhold, Mr. Hopkins, together with that gentleman's matrimonial connexions; and wound up with speaking evil of his employer, Mr. Blount.

"Well, I suppose that is all you have got to tell me," said his mentor, who had been listening to this diatribe with a cheerful grin.

"Why, yes," said Frank, hesitatingly, and getting rather red in the face.

"Ah, that'll do," said Highton, "I know all about it; come and have a cigar on the pier, and we'll take sweet counsel together."

Off started the two worthies accordingly; Mr. Highton merely putting his head into the private room of Mr. Rout, the junior partner and hard-working man, to announce that he was "going on 'Change;" which was true in one sense, inasmuch as to reach the contemplated pier they were bound to walk across the said 'Change. But when friendship (or anything else) stood in the way, Mr. Highton was not going to waste his time on 'Change with a view to business--no, thank you.

His business manner with his friend Frank, however, was positively energetic, when after a few whiffs of the proposed (and seconded) cigar, he blurted out suddenly—

"I say, Langley, you've been making a fool of yourself with that pretty girl, that Miss Ellen—Eleanor—what's her name? old Blount's niece."

No answer from Frank.

"You have—you know you have; I know you have, and everybody in Westport knows you have. What were you doing in Bogus-street at two o'clock yesterday afternoon? I'm sure the ancient buffalo (this was old Blount) did not send you up there to attend his niece on a shopping expedition. I saw you!" (He did not say, by-the-bye, what took him then from his counting-house at that time, nor is it a matter of much consequence any way.) "And what's more, my sister, Julia—Mrs. Wingfield, you know" (Frank *did* know)—"she had her eye upon you at the Caddy's party the other night; complete case of monopoly, she reported; not another soul in the room had a chance of speaking to you, much less dancing with you; two quadrilles, three polkas, two waltzes, and a galop, she says she counted."

"Confound her!" muttered Frank.

"And she says she believes that there was another gallop while she was at supper, and that such conduct is shameful."

"What the devil do you mean?" burst out Frank, in great wrath.

"Your conduct, of course, my dear fellow," replied Highton, slightly winking.

"Oh, ah, all right," said Frank, quite unconcernedly.

"Only you see, my dear boy, that old Blount must know about this as well as everybody else, and evidently don't seem to see it in the same light; intends the young lady for somebody else. Very diplomatic idea of Mr. Blount's, I must say, strengthening the business connexions of his house by a matrimonial alliance; quite worthy of our late friend Louis Philippe."

"D—n—t—n!" burst out Frank.

"Hush, hush, sir! No swearing here on the pier-head; here's one of the dock-gate men perfectly shocked to listen to you; pale in the face, he is, I declare."

"I say, Roberts," he continued, addressing a mahogany-faced salt, who was grinning after the manner of the cats in Cheshire, at hearing himself alluded to as above—"I say, Roberts, where is the *Julep* berthed?"

"*Julep*, Mr. Highton? Sou'-west corner Paradise Dock, sir."

"Thank you, that'll do," said Highton.

"What do you mean by that? and do you mean to give me any advice at all?" interposed Langley here, with some warmth.

"Restrain your brutal violence," replied Damon to Pythias, "and I'll give you the best advice I can; not first class perhaps, but good useful article."

"So this Mr. Spurkins is to dine with your governor to-morrow, eh? wish he'd ask me," continued Highton, in a musing tone; "righteous port the old boy keeps, very; but nevermind, that's all right, and you can either accompany him, or have a headache, and excuse yourself. You can be guided by circumstances, see what to-morrow brings forth, in fact. And as for to-morrow, when you call upon him, and offer to show him the lions (lions indeed! bricks and mortar, dirt, drays and ships), you bring him down to my office, and I'll do my best, in my quiet way—ahem—to show a stranger to the town a little polite attention. And now I suppose you want to prepare your fair friend's mind for the coming infliction—give her the office, as we say; so be off with you, I don't want you any longer. I say though, Frank," as Langley turned to go, "you'd better mind what you are after. Young Spurkins will have a deal

of money, and if she hears anything about that part of the business (women are all alike—I know 'em), she'll throw you overboard, as likely as not. I've known quite as promising a filly kick over the traces."

"Confound you and your brutal horsey slang! much you know about it!" emphasized Frank, marching off with a grand air of disdain and self-satisfaction.

"Good lad that," said Highton to himself, as he watched Frank's departure; "and he shan't be put upon, if I can help it. I can see what his governor is driving at well enough, and I should like to checkmate him, if it's only for the fun of the thing; besides, I hear that the hoary sinner expressed his opinion last Tuesday that I was not a steady man of business. Confound him! So now, as I have done my weed, I'll go and have lunch on board the *Julep*; perhaps that will steady me."

So saying, and pitching away the stump of his cigar, he proceeded towards the corner of the Paradise Dock, where lay that fine first-class packet ship, the *Julep*, Asa Koone, commander, twenty-two days from New York, and then and there discharging cotton, turpentine, pork, flour, and goodness only (and the mate) knows what more besides.

CHAPTER II.

ELEANOR.

WHILE Frank Langley is walking from the pier-head towards 22, Nelson-square, which was the casket which enclosed his treasure, (I flatter myself that is a correct expression,) a few words as to that young gentleman's past and present condition, and future prospects, may not be out of place.

He had at an early age been left under the guardianship of Mr. Henry Blount, the father of Eleanor, and senior partner of the firm of Blount, Brothers and Co., now presided over by the gentleman already distinguished in our story as "the ancient buffalo," "the hoary sinner," &c., all of which titles he doubtless well deserved. For a considerable time after the death of Mr. Henry Blount, nothing could be pleasanter than the relations existing between Mr. Walter Blount and his wards; but when young Langley grew from a boy to a handsome intelligent man, and when it was quite evident that an attachment had sprung up between the young people,

our worthy of Westernport announced to the partner of his joys and sorrows that he would be something-particularized if he would allow "that youngster to be looking after Eleanor;" and that Master Frank must go and establish himself in lodgings, insomuch that his little room in the Nelson-square mansion was to know him no more.

And so our hero left the guardian roof, sore at heart, but not one whit inclined to relinquish the pursuit of his guardian's niece, because, forsooth, the old party designed a better—i.e., a richer—match for her.

These few words of explanation will suffice to let the reader into the secret of Frank's surprise at Mr. Blount's apparent graciousness towards him, as shown at the commencement of our story; and his consternation, not to say disgust, at the development of that elderly gentleman's ideas, when the insidious motive became too apparent.

Having by these means brought Frank to Mr. Blount's door, let us pause for one moment, and ask what on earth has become of that ancient institution, the black footman? The writer recollects the time when to have a negro servitor was considered rather the correct thing than otherwise. No staff of black footmen, the reader will please to understand; no human being could put up with that; but one among the staff, "*velut inter ignes minores*," one in his solitary and particularly independent grandeur.

Such an animal was generally three parts useless, and the remaining part was pretty evenly divided between impudence and pretence of doing his duty; but he was, nevertheless, a feature of a by-gone age, and as such we lament him.

Mr. Blount had a sable retainer such as we have described, who, when he opened the door to Langley, grinned aloud, as a friend of ours used to say; and really, seeing that it was our hero's second visit that morning, and that he and Juba were very old acquaintances, a little irregularity on the part of the latter might be excusable.

"Mr. Blount at home?" quoth Frank, with commendable gravity.

"Iss, Massa."

"Miss Blount—I suppose—at home—eh?"

"Iss, Massa Frank."

Here the grin and the display of ivory tusks fairly beggared description.

"What the deuce are you laughing at,

Juba?" says Frank, sternly. "Here, take my hat and hang it up."

"Iss, Massa Frank, Missey, she upstairs. Oh, golly! Oh, La—a—d!" and so saying, and with a burst of shrieking laughter, no longer restrainable, downstairs he bundled, Frank's hat still in his hand, and the house-door open, towards the kitchen regions, there to relieve his feelings by describing to the "young ladies" there, how Massa Frank, him call at half-past nine, and call again at half-past twelve, and what ole Massa him 'll say, oh, golly!"

"What is the matter, Frank, dear?" said a sweet voice belonging to a sweet face looking over the stair-railings at our friend, as he stood in the hall delivering a tolerably loudly-muttered blessing after the downstairs departed one.

"Why, confound that black beast!" began Frank.

"Hush, hush, sir! I cannot allow such language. What do you mean by coming here again this morning? I know my aunt will be very angry; come upstairs directly."

The last remark being definite, our hero thought fit to obey it; and immediately afterwards, a listener (had any such impertinent character been lurking about the premises) might have heard a few short ejaculations resembling—

"There, Frank! don't, dear! you'll put my hair out of curl! I hear my aunt coming," &c.

The which remarks, if our young ladies and young gentlemen readers cannot understand without our interpretation, we are extremely sorry for them, that's all.

And into the room came Mrs. Blount, portly, kind-hearted, loving her niece as she would a daughter; and with immense faith in her rather tyrannical husband. Here, be it remarked, that a moderately tyrannical husband always gets his shirt-buttons sewn on and his dinners well cooked; and the present writer seriously contemplates establishing that domestic régime for his own selfish purposes; but, however, as we have said, in came Mrs. Blount. She was very fond of Frank, and proceeded to kiss him as she wished him "Good morning." Eleanor looked on with the greatest calmness, as if the said osculatory process was a strange idea, and one that could never possibly have occurred to *her*. Great was Mrs. Blount's wrath at the idea of Frank being exported, "just exactly" (as she described

it) "like a bale of goods, to suit his uncle's business views;" and equally great was her surprise when the announcement was made to her of the approaching visit of Mr. Spurkins.

"He's very rich, isn't he? and isn't he very good-looking?" asked Eleanor, with the coolest expression of countenance possible to conceive.

"He is a frightfully idiotic beast!" exclaimed Frank, with considerable emphasis.

"Dear me, Frank! you told me you had never seen him," returned the young lady; "however, as you say, I presume he will be here at dinner-time to-morrow, and then I shall judge for myself. You are coming, Frank?"

This last sentence was put inquiringly, and somewhat tenderly.

"No, I am not," responded our hero, in high dudgeon; "the old buf—" (he had nearly come out with it) "Mr. Blount was kind enough to ask me, but I really think I am better away."

"Nonsense, Frank," said kind Mrs. Blount, "why shouldn't you come? What's the matter?"

"There are two or three reasons why I should be better away," replied Frank, "one is that I probably should not be in the very best of tempers, and—and—"

Here he was in a fix, and could hardly explain himself; the fact of the case being that he had extremely strong suspicions that his friend Mr. Highton's exhibition of the "lions" of Westernport, in what he called "a quiet way," to the interesting stranger, would, in all human probability, result in some slight excitement, to make use of the mildest expression. Very prudent on Frank's part.

"Well, come if you can," said the elder lady.

"You can stay away if you like," remarked the younger one. Both of which two little speeches our friend interpreted as they were meant, and shortly took his departure.

CHAPTER III.

MR. SPURKINS.

"MR. SPURKINS down yet?" inquired Frank of a white-chokered waiter, as he entered the coffee-room of the Castor Hotel.

"Not down yet, sir," was the reply; "has ordered breakfast; expect him down d'rectly, sir."

"Just send this card up to his room, will you?"

"Certainly, sir."

"That'll start him," muttered Frank, as the waiter vanished.

Very little "starting" was needed apparently, for in two or three minutes Mr. Spurkins made his appearance, duly heralded by the waiter.

Why Frank should be surprised at finding in Mr. Spurkins a good-looking and gentlemanly young man we cannot tell, except that his prejudiced imagination had prepared him for something very different. His disgust we can better understand. At any rate, both surprised and disgusted he was, but, notwithstanding, managed to make himself very agreeable, taking a cup of coffee at his new acquaintance's breakfast-table, and trotting out small talk about the news in the morning papers, the markets, the beauty of the day (which even the Westernport smoke could not hide), and "things in general."

Breakfast being concluded, the gentlemen decided that the first step to be taken was to walk down to 27, Black Smithy-street, to enable Mr. Spurkins to pay his dutiful respects to Mr. Blount. The young gentlemen were most graciously received by that potentate, who, it may be presumed, had received good news in his morning's letters, which were lying opened before him, and was consequently amiable, for him.

"I shall confide you to Mr. Langley's care—Frank here—you'll take care of Mr. Spurkins, Frank; show him what there is to be seen; not much, you know, Mr. Spurkins, in this dirty old provincial town of ours, but the river and the docks, you know, you might take him to see, and recollect dinner; 22, Nelson-square; six o'clock, sharp. By-the-bye, Mrs. Blount will be happy to see you at lunch, if you feel disposed to stroll up there about one o'clock—no ceremony—old friends, you know—make yourself quite at home. And you'll excuse me now, for I shall be busy all day; good morning."

Acting on which unmistakable hint our friends bowed themselves out, not at all sorry that business deprived them of the advantage of Mr. Blount's society during their peregrinations.

"Tight hand, your governor?" inquired Spurkins, in a perfectly audible voice, as they passed through the general office.

"Oh dear, no," replied Langley, for the

benefit of the listening clerks; "most amiable man; never satisfied unless he is making his young friends happy, or providing them with situations—on the coast of Africa or some such hole," he added in a lower tone.

"I say, Langley," here interrupted young Puckthorpe in a tearful voice, "there's that parcel of damaged Ceylon coffee; I was at it all yesterday, and I don't know what to do about those bags marked B in a diamond, and—why, you never mean to say you are off again to-day!"

"Go to Bath!" politely responded Frank, as he slammed the door after him, and descending the stairs with his new acquaintance led the way to the office of Muncombe, Highton and Company. Here they were most graciously received by Mr. Highton, who, in Mr. Spurkins' opinion, completely justified Langley's commendation, as a very agreeable, good-natured fellow.

He entered at once into Langley's plans for showing Spurkins whatever there was to be seen ("precious little, Mr. Spurkins, I assure you;") but, he said, tossing a note across the table to Langley, "that note has just arrived, rather *apropos*. You are not in the American trade, Mr. Spurkins? No; I thought not: never on board a New York packet ship? Indeed! Read that note aloud, Frank."

"Packet-ship *Julep*, Paradise Dock, Tuesday morning," began Frank. "Dear sir, I shall be happy"—ah, hum—"to see you, and"—ah, yes—"any friends you may wish to bring with you, to inspect the noble ship which I have the honour to command, and to drink a glass of genuine champagne. I am, dear sir, yours sincerely.—A. KOONE."

"Very polite of Captain Koone, Highton," says Frank.

"Very, indeed," demurely responded Highton. "Well," continued that worthy, "in the meantime we will have a stroll and a cigar: will you walk, Mr. Spurkins?"

CHAPTER IV.

A JOLLY LUNCH.

OUR readers will please to bear in mind, that in the days of which we are writing, though there was steam communication between Great Britain and New York, the Atlantic was not crowded as it now is with huge red-funnelled monsters,

doing their work from shore to shore in ten days or less, and as a matter of course taking the passenger traffic almost entirely into their own hands. It is not so very many years ago since the New York liners, deservedly famous for their speed and the excellence of their cabins, used to have those cabins full of passengers on both their outward and homeward trips.

On board of one of these ships, then, did Highton introduce Mr. Spurkins to Captain Asa Koone, who expressed himself as very happy to see Mr. Highton and his friend on board the *Julep*.

We may here remark that Langley left his friends at the ship's side, pleading "an engagement" (who knows? perhaps he had one), and after a faint remonstrance from Highton, and an expression of regret on the part of Mr. Spurkins, was permitted to go his own way, rejoicing, no doubt.

After expatiating for a few minutes on the roomy decks and noble proportions of his ship, the hospitable captain invited them "to come and see what sort of a cabin the New York carpenters had built for him."

Those excellent men seemed, in the opinion of our friends, to have done their work admirably, for the cabins were not only elegant, but, what is of infinitely more consequence, airy and commodious. And Mr. Spurkins, as—at the captain's request—he seated himself at the table, could not help being privately of opinion that the steward of the *Julep* was a most talented and energetic officer, and deserved well of his country. In point of fact, the table was spread with a most appetising lunch, "cold but capital," as Mr. Jingle says. But Mr. Jingle never partook of buffalo hump, or canvas-backed ducks, except in his own fervid imagination; and in these delicacies did Mr. Spurkins for the first time revel. Moreover, the champagne was, as the captain asserted, genuine; for the New Yorkers rather pride themselves on importing that wine in its purity. And as there were at the table half-a-dozen agreeable men, both American and English, who had been invited to meet Mr. Highton and his friend, no wonder that the said friend found himself in a short time extremely comfortable, rather talkative withal, and somewhat excited by a description of the glories of the United States generally, and of the city of New York in particular, which city Mr. Spurkins then and there expressed his

intention of visiting as speedily as he conveniently could, and, if possible, that he would be a passenger with Captain Koone. But there was a difficulty. He could not be ready in a fortnight—no, he really feared he could not; and to wait until Captain Koone's return to Westernport—say, in three or four months—was, in his state of ardour, not to be thought of. In this dilemma, one of the Westernport gentlemen gravely suggested his friend Highton's cutter, the *Lotus*, as a first-rate conveyance in case of emergency.

Now Highton had to submit to a good deal of chaffing from his intimates touching his yacht. He would sometimes never go near her for a couple of months at a time, and then with very little notice to his sailing-master, and none at all to any one else, he would make a start for nowhere in particular; and Mr. Rout, on coming down to the office some fine morning, would find a brief note on his desk, announcing the fact that Mr. Highton had gone on a short trip to Dublin, and that he would be back in a week.

"A week indeed!" the hard-working junior partner would exclaim; "six weeks more likely!—six months, I shouldn't wonder! and Dublin may mean Gibraltar, or Jericho!"

Let us hope that Mr. Rout did not mention the latter place by way of alliteration with the former; though, as Muncombe & Co. never received any consignments from either locality, it was probably a matter of perfect indifference to him whether the natives, or anybody else, chose to spell the names of their respective abiding-places with a J or a G.

To return to Mr. Spurkins. He turned eagerly to Highton, and demanded if he had any intention of crossing the Atlantic that summer; and if so, might he, Spurkins, "venture to ask, to—to beg as a great favour—" and here he began to hesitate and stammer. But Highton, to his great delight, met him half-way.

"You see, my dear fellow, that I would as soon take a cruise to New York as to anywhere else, and sooner, if it would be any gratification to you; and if you think you could put up with the accommodation of the *Lotus* (she is only seventy-five tons, remember), she shall be at your service on this day month, or any time you may prefer, and we'll visit Captain Koone in his ancestral halls."

Quiet glances passed between some of

the guests on hearing this warm-hearted outburst from Highton; but if they thought that that gentleman's eloquence was due to the good champagne, they were singularly mistaken. He continued the conversation by remarking that the *Lotus* was a good little sea-boat, and had tolerably comfortable accommodations (very comfortable, he might have said) for her size; and concluded by inviting his young friend to take a short cruise with him on the morrow or the day after, "just to see how he liked it."

This offer, we need scarcely say, was gratefully accepted, and shortly afterwards, having said "Good morning" (it was half-past four in the afternoon (to their host, Mr. Highton and his *protégé* were filling a cab with cigar-smoke—the former on his way to his office, and the latter to the Castors Hotel, where he proposed to have a bottle of soda-water and a bath before dressing for dinner, for which, however, he felt little appetite, and small blame to him. Beyond this, however, there was little harm done; and when at six o'clock he was ushered into Mr. Blount's drawing-room, though he felt slightly feverish and excited, there was nothing in his appearance or manner to denote that he had recently risen from an outrageously jolly lunch on board the fast-sailing packet ship, *Julep*.

CHAPTER V.

A FAMILY PARTY.

"We are quite a family party, my dear Spurkins," said old Blount, when dinner had fairly begun. "I have so much to talk to you about, that I thought we had better be by ourselves. Langley, of course, is quite at home" ("I used to be," thought poor Frank), "and my old friend Stewart here has been a correspondent of your father's house and mine for the last five-and-twenty years."

"Ah, indeed!" said Spurkins, looking across the table to the gentleman in question, a bright-eyed, intelligent-looking Scotsman, whose tanned and wrinkled face and grey head bore testimony to the powers of the tropical sun.

That nothing had occurred to injure his constitution or impair his appetite, was evident from the strict attention he was paying to his dinner; whereas our friend Mr. Spurkins, having but a faint appetite, was allaying his feverishness with pale ale, champagne, or sherry,

whichever happened to be nearest, and keeping up an animated conversation with Miss Blount, who, greatly to the surprise of her aunt, the satisfaction of her uncle, and the disgust of her *vis-à-vis*, Frank Langley to wit, seemed to enjoy Mr. Spurkins's small talk, and even to endeavour to draw him out. For instance—

"Mrs. Blount tells me that she did not see your two youngsters at lunch-time to-day—better employed, eh? What do you think of the docks and river, Mr. Spurkins?"

"Splendid, sir!" replied that gentleman, enthusiastically. "And the ships too—really I was quite surprised."

"No, no," said old Blount, shaking his head good-humouredly, "you beat us there. We have nothing like your Indianmen."

"I beg your pardon," retorted the chivalrous Spurkins, mindful of absent friends, "I consider the American packet-ships as fine as anything we can show, and their cabin accommodations are most superb. Hospitable men, too, are the Yankee captains, very."

Here the host turned a sharp inquiring glance at Langley, which seemed to say, "Where the d—l have you been taking him?"

"I walked with Mr. Spurkins as far as the Paradise Dock," remarked Frank, in answer to Mr. Blount's angry look. "Mr. Highton was kind enough to offer to introduce us to the captain of the *Julep*, but as I had gone so far, I recollected that lot of damaged coffee, ex *Vagrant*, from Ceylon, discharging close at hand, and so——"

"Ah, yes," interrupted Spurkins, "Langley had some business engagement, so was obliged to leave us; a jolly good lunch you missed, I can tell you, Langley. Very judicious ideas old Koone has on the subject of champagne and feeding in general."

What was it at this juncture that caused Mrs. Blount to put on a look of amazement that caused Eleanor to colour up with rather a guilty look, and incited the jolly old Scotsman to murmur under his breath for Frank's ear alone—"Ye young traitor!" Could it be that Frank, regardless of damaged Ceylon coffee, had, as soon as he saw his *protégé* in safe hands, hastened to Nelson-square, and had then and there taken lunch quite as pleasantly as he would have done on board the *Julep*, and in the company, moreover, of Mr.

Stewart, who was indeed staying at his friend's house? Could this be the cause of the consciousness exhibited by, at any rate, the ladies of the company? Forbid it propriety, truthfulness, and morality in general!

"Were you ever abroad, Mr. Spurkins?" asked Eleanor, wishing to divert the conversation into a more favourable channel.

"No, indeed, Miss Blount, but I hope to make a voyage very shortly; Koone, of the *Julep*, has invited me to visit the American States with him, and I should very much like to make the passage in his ship, if I could only get ready in time; but there's the difficulty."

"What do you think of the coast of Africa?" interrupted Eleanor. "I have heard that described as an eligible and delightful place to visit, and not nearly so unhealthy as it is generally represented."

"Why, Miss Blount!" exclaimed the gentleman—

"Or Demerara—I wonder you don't turn your ideas toward Demerara, Mr. Spurkins. Think of the gorgeous luxuriance of tropical scenery, and—and the sugar plantations, and all that sort of thing, and the parrots and the monkeys."

"My good gracious, Miss Blount!" replied the horrified Spurkins, "what have I done that you should wish me to be cut off in the prime of my youth? Don't you know that the coast of Africa is a perfect Morgue, a regular dead-house? And as for Demerara, Griffiths in our office, who was there eighteen months, and had the fever, and his coffin made, assures me that nothing can exist there but bull-frogs and Scotchmen."

"Eh, man! but your friend McGriffin, or what d'ye call him, must be a nice animal!" exclaimed the naturally indignant Stewart.

"Hum, ahem! hum, ha!" coughed old Blount from the end of the table. "Stewart, a glass of wine. Mr. Spurkins, will you join us? Juba, champagne to Mr. Spurkins."

During this slight episode, Eleanor rubbed her mouth pretty hard with her table-napkin, Frank choked himself with half a glass of sherry going the wrong way, and good Mrs. Blount's face of consternation was ludicrous to behold. To do Mr. Spurkins justice, we must say that he was the only unconcerned party at the table; and having bowed gravely to Mr. Stewart, just as if nothing particular had been said, drank his champagne with the

gusto of a man who was taking his first glass on the happy occasion. Honour to the brave—or the impudent! He then continued his interrupted conversation.

"No, indeed, Miss Blount; but a voyage to the United States is a very different thing. Fine climate—height of civilized society. And think of the joys of the outward voyage! 'A life on the ocean wave,' and all that, you know."

"Oh, I quite envy you!" said Eleanor. "Do you go soon? And will you be away long?"

On this simple question becoming audible—which, as Mr. Stewart was sulky, Mrs. Blount dumbfounded, and Frank silently disposed, it very easily was—a low growl was heard proceeding from the foot of the table. If the gallant Spurkins "heard it," he (like the dying gladiator) "heeded not," for he continued, perfectly unconcerned—

"By the favour of one of the kindest and most liberal men I ever met with, who has placed his yacht at my disposal, I can start at almost any time I like—that is, if I cannot get ready to sail with Captain Koone; and as to the time of my return, Miss Blount, if the question had been asked me this morning, I should certainly have decided upon taking a holiday for twelvemonths; but now" (this was said with a half bow and a fascinating smile) "such an absence from England would seem far too long; and we shall certainly plough the Atlantic on our homeward course ere six months be past and gone."

After this there was clearly no more to be said. Eleanor turned an appealing look towards her aunt, who rose immediately, and the ladies left the gentlemen to the enjoyment of what Mr. Highton was accustomed to call their host's righteous port. On the present occasion, however, that deservedly praised vintage was hardly appreciated; for, after the decanter had made a couple of rounds, Frank announced that he was not very well—had a headache, in fact—and would take his departure.

"If you are ready, Spurkins, we might go together," he suggested.

Mr. Spurkins murmured something about "upstairs" and "the ladies."

"Nonsense, man!" blurted out old Stewart. "Come along wi' ye. I want a stroll and a cigar—take one, Mr. Spurkins—and you and Frank and I will walk together as far as 'the Castors.'"

Apart from a charitable desire that

Spurkins should not "join the ladies," the astute Stewart foretold stormy weather brewing overhead, and, naturally enough, wished to get out of the house while the tempest raged. So, after a very cavalier adieu on Mr. Blount's side, and a most affectionate farewell on the part of Mr. Spurkins, that youth and his escort shaped their course for the hotel. Thereupon Mr. Blount shaped *his* course for the drawing-room, where he found his life's joy looking extremely frightened, and his niece looking so very demure and unconcerned that no casual observer could have guessed that only half-an-hour previously she had been driven by heartfelt vexation and restrained laughter to the verge of hysterics. Fortunately she recollected in time that that was a species of complaint that her revered uncle did not permit in his establishment.

"So, madam," the autocrat began, "here's a pretty state of things! May I ask why that idiot didn't come here to lunch, instead of making an ass of himself on board of that packet-ship—a Yankee packet-ship, indeed!" (Mr. B. was not in the American trade.) "And then to come here and talk nonsense about going on cruises and 'a life on the ocean wave!' I'll 'ocean wave' him! I'll write to his father to-morrow! But it's all that Highton's doing. And then the young donkey must needs insult my old friend Stewart. And you, Eleanor," he continued, turning sharply round on his niece, "encouraging him in his folly!"

"Who, sir?—Mr. Stewart?" meekly inquired the young lady.

"No, miss!" thundered her uncle, "not Mr. Stewart! You know as well as I do, I mean that—that Spurkins, and——"

"Indeed, uncle, I thought I was only doing my duty in entering into conversation with your guest."

"Pretty conversation, indeed!" bel-lowed the ancient buffalo, "about Demerara and the coast of Africa. But I know where the text of your sermon comes from, and I'll teach Master Frank to raise a mutiny in my peaceful household! I'll ship him off somewhere or other; and if he doesn't like Demerara or Old Calabar, I wonder what he'll say to Kamschatka or Van Dieman's Land, or some cheerful spot of that description. *He* shall have 'a life on the ocean wave,' and plenty of it!"

"Indeed, Mr. Blount," said his help-mate, "I think you are very cross and very unjust. I am sure Mr. Highton

meant nothing but what was polite and attentive in taking a stranger to see a fine ship. And as for poor Frank, what harm has he done?"

"Harm, madam? harm? Why, he—he—Mrs. Blount, you had better go to bed, and, Eleanor, you had better go too." (Not a bad idea on old Blount's part, was it?)

"Good-night, uncle," said the young lady, rising, and making him a sweeping curtsy as she walked towards the door. "Good-night, and" (here she fairly broke down and burst into tears) "it's a shame, uncle, it's a shame! What has poor Frank done that he should be sent away from England to die in some dreadful foreign land? If poor dear papa had lived, he would never have allowed it—no, never. But one thing"—sob—"I am quite determined"—sob—"if Frank goes abroad"—sob—"I will go with him—I *will*." Exit sobbing, attended and soothed by her aunt.

"A'hem! hem! hem!" from Mr. Blount, clearing his throat violently.

Rat-tat-tat-tat from the knocker of the street-door.

Enter Mr. Stewart, who takes a chair and sits in silence for a few minutes, then remarks inquiringly—

"Been making a brute of yourself, I suppose, Blunt?"

"Well, y-e-e-s, I suppose I have," replies that malefactor.

"Thought you would," answered his friend. "Good night!"

CHAPTER VI.

FRENCH LEAVE.

"WHO's there?" roared Spurkins, from under the bed-clothes at eight o'clock on the following morning; "why, boots, it's only eight o'clock; told you to call me at nine!"

"Beg pardon, sir," responded that functionary; "but, young man, sir—wants to see you, sir."

"Wants me?" said Spurkins, in some surprise, and raising himself in bed.

Thereupon entered a smart young fellow in blue jacket and gilt buttons, and otherwise very neatly got up, who introduced himself as "Tomkins, sir, steward of the *Lotus*."

"Mr. Highton's compliments, sir, and he would be glad if you would look sharp; it's a splendid day, and 'a fine sou'-easterly breeze.'"

"Oh, ah, to be sure," said Spurkins, who was by no means clear whether he had, or had not, made an appointment with Highton for this morning. "Where does the yacht lie, and when shall I come on board? I must have some breakfast first, you know."

"Beg pardon, sir, but I've got a cab waiting, and it's near the top of the flood, and I think we can promise you a better breakfast aboard the *Lotus* than you can get here; though I dessay things is pretty comfortable here for a hotel."

This last remark was made in a patronizing, semi-pitying manner, as if the landlord and staff of the Castors' Hotel, having the misfortune to be ashore and not afloat, did the best they could under those melancholy circumstances.

"Then I suppose I had better get up at once," said Spurkins, submissively, and preparing to turn out.

"Certainly, sir; can I be of any service, sir?" inquired the polite Tomkins.

"Yes, you can," was the reply. "Please go and fetch my hot-water. I told boots not to bring it till nine o'clock; and bring me a bottle of soda-water up with you."

"Beg pardon, sir," insinuated Tomkins; "but might I recommend just a leetle dash of maraschino in the bottom of the tumbler? Mr. Highton often gives gentlemen that feel a little squeamish or so a glass of maraschino. The ladies are uncommon fond of it, too. Have some, sir."

"Well, you may bring it," said Spurkins, who considered it by no means a bad idea.

Thus fortified, our friend proceeded to dress, being materially assisted therein by Tomkins, who, without waiting for orders, and as coolly as if he had been valet to Mr. Spurkins for the last twelve months, proceeded to fill a small carpet-bag with a few shirts, brushes, and minor articles which he seemed to think would be desirable on board the yacht. Then counselling Spurkins to leave his hat behind, and take his travelling cap, he seized his bag and great-coat and followed him downstairs; when at the hall door they found a cab in waiting. There was a passenger already inside in the shape of a huge hamper, which the steward described as "a few little things Mr. Highton told me to bring aboard, sir." With this he slammed the door, jumped on the box, told the cabman to drive fast, as the boat had been waiting for them a

long time. And thus our friend Spurkins found himself rattling along unknown streets towards some pier or another, whence he was to embark on board a yacht he had never seen, belonging to a gentleman whom he had met for the first time yesterday. As to what the yacht's destination might be, or how long the cruise was intended to last, he had not the faintest idea.

But what of all that? There was a fine day, a fresh breeze, a well-found sea-boat; and we can only hope that he may enjoy himself, and wish that we were going with him.

Wherever he was going, it was quite evident where he was *not* going, and that was to the office of Blount Brothers & Co. And he really should have done so—he should indeed—had it only been to say good-morning to his host of the night before. Mere civility apart, however, it unfortunately happened that Mr. Blount received on this very morning a letter from Spurkins, the elder, in which that gentleman referred to his son as being able to furnish his correspondent with certain particulars and minor details. When, therefore, eleven o'clock came and no Spurkins, the head of the house became much agitated; and after snubbing and snarling at all his clerks within reach, demanded if anyone had seen Mr. Langley that morning. Yes, Mr. Langley had been at the office an hour previously, and had gone down to that ship from Ceylon. So somebody was started forthwith to bring him into the presence; and in the meantime Mr. Blount sat meditating the precise terms in which he would revile Frank for having deserted the youth whom he had formally entrusted to his charge.

"So, Mr. Langley," he began, when that gentleman entered the private office, "where's Mr. Spurkins?"

"Don't exactly know, sir," meekly replied Frank.

"Don't know, sir!" roared the infuriated old party; "didn't I intrust him to your charge, sir? And wasn't he making an ass of himself all yesterday, sir? Just as if Providence hadn't done that business for him quite sufficiently. And where is he now, sir? Answer me that!"

"Upon my word, sir," answered Frank, drawing himself up with an air of offended dignity, "Mr. Spurkins, no doubt, considers that he is quite able to take care of himself, and if he chooses to take a

sail with Mr. Highton—as I have very little doubt he is doing at the present moment—I do not see how I can possibly interfere with his amusements.”

“Con—found Mr. Highton, and his boat, too!” shouted the irascible old gentleman.

“Oh, certainly, sir,” blandly assented Frank; “but I was going to remark, that on calling upon Mr. Spurkins at the ‘Castors’ this morning, I found that he had left quite early with a man answering to the description of Mr. Highton’s steward; so, as I came down town, I called at Muncombe, Highton, & Co.’s, and I found that Mr. Rout had received a short note from Highton, saying that he had gone out for a sail, and that he would certainly return this evening.”

“Are you sure he didn’t say ‘this month?’” retorted Mr. Blount, with what he meant to be sarcastic bitterness. “Look here, Frank,” he continued, “I cannot blame you, but I have here a private letter from that—that whelp’s father, in which he refers me to his promising son for information about this, that, and the other thing. And what am I to do? Do you think that infernal boat will really be back again in the river to-night? You do. Well then, I’ll trust you to go on board her and bring Mr. Spurkins off; tell him I particularly wish to see him to-morrow morning. Particularly, you understand, Frank?”

“Certainly, sir,” replied that model of obedience and submission, as he proceeded to leave the sanctum known as the private office.

“And, I say, Frank, just turn over that proposal of mine about Demerara in your mind, will you? Fine opportunity, I assure you.”

“Mr. Spurkins does not seem to report very favourably of the climate, sir,” remarked Frank, in the most innocent manner possible.

“D—n Mr. Spurkins!” shrieked the naughty old man; “such an idiot as that has no business to form an opinion on any subject whatever, much less to express one!”

“And yet,” thought Frank, “just because he has plenty of money, and will have more, the old savage would absolutely sacrifice my darling Eleanor, his own niece, to such an idiot as he describes. Not that Spurkins is an idiot,

or anything of the sort; I wish he was; but he shan’t have Eleanor for all that.”

As these ideas were passing through Frank’s mind, his principal continued—

“No, my dear boy, about Demerara you may safely consult my old friend Stewart. I expect him here about one o’clock; consult Mr. Stewart, Frank.”

“I shall certainly make a point of doing so,” replied our hero, and withdrew.

Whether he was dutifully anxious to lose no time in following his quondam guardian’s advice, or whether he thought he could receive more genuine and unadulterated information from Mr. Stewart, in Nelson-square, than in the murky atmosphere of Back Smithy-street, is uncertain; one thing, however, is quite certain, that to Nelson-square he bent his steps as fast as he could conveniently walk; but when the well-known door was opened in answer to his knock, instead of his beholding the regal countenance of Juba—(that black person was supposed to have been a king in his own country, Congo or Quashybungo, or wherever it was)—instead, we say, of his meeting that regal countenance bent upon him with a benign grin, he saw Mrs. Blount, whose face evinced so much anxiety that Frank exclaimed at once—

“Why, aunt!” (he was accustomed to call her ‘aunt’) “what on earth is the matter?”

The matter was that Miss Eleanor Blount, feeling very unwell and much agitated, and dreading more than she need have done annoyance from her uncle as to the propriety of her *discouraging* Frank and *encouraging* Mr. Spurkins, had that morning quietly taken herself off to Wales, where at the pretty little village of Cwmffytod, and in the cottage of her dear Aunt Agatha, her father’s sister, she proposed to pass a short time, during which she hoped that Mr. Spurkins would start on his Atlantic expedition, and her uncle arrive at a more Christian frame of mind regarding “dear Frank” and his future prospects. Mr. Stewart was accompanying her part of the way, and on his return he had promised to bear the brunt of his old friend’s wrath, which, on his hearing of the unlicensed departure of his niece, was expected to be a very uncommon display indeed.

THE OLD MAN'S WARNING.

I WOULD not dim that brilliant cheek,
 Nor daunt that haughty brow;
 Yet, I would fain some feeling see,
 Some sadness in thee now.

Thou leav'st to-day thy father's halls,
 Thou leav'st thy mother's care;
 And tokens of an altered lot
 Are twin'd amid thy hair.

The magic circlet on thy hand,
 Is shining in the sun;
 It tells of girlhood passed away—
 Of woman's life begun.

Thou walkest with a stately step,
 A mien composed and proud;
 And on the bride's rare loveliness,
 Sound plaudits deep and loud.

But, Nina, in thy lustrous eyes,
 No softness can be traced;
 No quivering in the small white hand,
 That's in thy bridegroom's placed.

The husband of but one short hour,
 Is standing by thee now;
 What means the paling of thy cheek,
 The shadow on thy brow?

Alas, I fear, the heart spoke not,
 Love's warm response seemed dead;
 Maiden, no happy future comes
 From vows so coldly said.

And, Nina, hear me speak once more—
 An old man's words are true;
 If false thy heart to plighted vow,
 Thy future thou shalt rue.

The wings of joy's bright angel wave,
 Where love's a bidden guest,
 And whisp'ring to the gentle bride,
 Telleth of joy and rest.

But at an unhallow'd bridal,
 Where hand not heart is given,
 The angel stands aloof and weeps,
 Then wings his flight to Heaven.

Nina, does that angel hover,
 Around thy path to-day:
 Murmuring blessings on thy bridal,
 That will not pass away?

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NO 24.

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